



ANNUAL REPORT

2020–21



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The ABS Annual Report 2020–21 can be found at: <https://www.transparency.gov.au/publications>

Acknowledgement of country

The Australian Bureau of Statistics acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters, and community. The ABS pays its respects to their cultures and their Elders past, present, and emerging.



Australian Statistician

The Hon Michael Sukkar MP
Assistant Treasurer
Minister for Housing
Minister for Homelessness, Social and Community Housing

Dear Minister

I am pleased to present the annual report for the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) for the year ended 30 June 2021.

This report has been prepared in accordance with section 46 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (the PGPA Act). Section 46 of the PGPA Act requires that an annual report be given to the entity's responsible Minister for presentation to the Parliament.

The report includes the ABS' audited financial statements in accordance with subsection 43(4) of the PGPA Act as well as the ABS' annual performance statement in accordance with subsection 39(1)(b) of the PGPA Act.

As required by section 10 of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014*, I certify that the ABS has prepared fraud risk assessments and a fraud control plan; that the ABS has fraud prevention, detection, investigation and reporting mechanisms that meet its needs; and that I have taken all reasonable measures to deal with fraud relating to the ABS. There have been no significant instances of fraud identified during the period.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Gruen".

Dr David Gruen

16 September 2021

Australian Statistician's review

Introduction

With the COVID-19 pandemic as a backdrop throughout 2020–21, the ABS continued to adapt its work program and ways of working to deliver the statistics, information, and insights governments and the community needed to craft responses to the pandemic.

As pandemic-driven restrictions changed across states and territories, often in response to rapidly growing outbreaks, the ABS adapted its protocols for conducting surveys across the country, and preparations for the 18th Census of Population and Housing. It did so to safeguard the health and safety of staff and survey respondents, and to achieve the highest response rates possible in the circumstances.

Preparing for the 2021 Census

The ABS was focused on finalising system development, testing, and assurance for the 2021 Census. Key achievements were:

- **Running a large-scale voluntary Operational Readiness Exercise (ORE) for the Census in October 2020** – which involved approximately 100,000 dwellings and played a key role in preparing for, and assuring, the 2021 Census. The response rate for the ORE, at slightly more than 50%, was higher than expected, and the exercise generated improved understanding of the readiness of staff, systems, processes, and vendor partnerships. It also gave the ABS the opportunity to test its plans for conducting the Census under conditions of partial or severe community lockdown.
- **Developing, and receiving final Government approval for, the 2021 Census communications campaign** – which was more comprehensive than previous Census campaigns and consisted of three phases: 'Persuasion and education', 'Completion', and 'Reminder'. The campaign used the tagline 'Every stat tells a story' and spanned a variety of platforms, with advertisements in 28 languages including 19 Indigenous languages. A range of public relations and communication engagement activities supported the campaign.
- **Partnering with leading information and communication technology (ICT) service providers to develop the 2021 Census Digital Service** – which was a critical risk reduction measure to ensure reliable operation of the online Census form and build community confidence in the delivery of ICT services for events in the national interest. This approach provided a usable, secure online service, which achieved accredited web content accessibility Level AA (the gold standard). The 2021 Census Digital Service received accreditation from the Digital Transformation Agency, having passed all the assessment criteria of the Government's Service Design and Delivery Standard. The ABS worked closely with the Australian Signals Directorate and the Australian Cyber Security Centre to ensure that robust security measures were implemented, including an independent Information Security Registered Assessors Program assessment, significant performance testing in excess of the peak needs of Census night, and 26 discrete distributed denial-of-service tests – a level of testing well beyond that conducted for the 2016 Census.
- **Using integrated administrative data for the first time** – which supported Census data collection, improved the quality of Census counts, and provided back up for data gaps.

Providing information to understand the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic

The ABS continued to release statistics and information to guide Australia's policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. This included provisional and preliminary releases, statistics based on new 'big data' sources (such as Single Touch Payroll (STP)), and rapid household and business surveys. These provided more up-to-date insights into household and business responses to rapidly evolving circumstances. Key achievements were:

- Publishing a series of articles on how the Consumer Price Index (CPI) was adjusted to take into account actions by governments, businesses, and individuals in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This included information on methods changes and treatments for programs including free childcare and HomeBuilder.
- Re-weighting the CPI using a range of timely data sources (e.g. supermarket scanner data) to ensure that the

weighting patterns for the CPI continued to reflect Australian household spending.

- Supporting research using person and business level integrated microdata, including the:
 - Department of Health's analysis of which groups in the community had lower and higher rates of vaccination against COVID-19.
 - Department of Health's investigation into the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on rates of mental illness, suicide risk, and suicide rates.
 - Treasury's real-time analysis of the economy and labour market as the economy recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic-induced recession.
- Supporting the greater use of labour statistics during the COVID-19 pandemic through targeted education, analysis, and products.
- Publishing COVID-19 pandemic-related data and statistics in accessible and interesting ways on our website and social media channels.

More information about the ABS response to the COVID-19 pandemic is provided in [Special articles](#), and in case studies in the [Annual performance statement](#).

Improving data provider and data user experience

The ABS continued to streamline and modernise the processes involved in providing data to the ABS, including greater use of email, text messages, application programming interfaces (APIs), web-scraping, and automated data submission.

The ABS worked with other agencies to use existing data sources and reduce respondent burden. From the September quarter 2020, the ABS ceased collecting wage data from financial entities as part of the Quarterly Business Indicator Survey, replacing it with wages data collected by the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority. More information about initiatives to reduce burden is available in case studies in the [Annual performance statement](#).

The ABS launched a new website designed to make it easier to find, interpret, and use ABS data and information. The ABS also moved the ABS DataLab to the cloud, to enhance security and enable researchers to analyse large datasets using advanced tools and data science techniques.

Enhancing the work environment for staff

The ABS implemented a range of initiatives to raise standards for office staff and interviewers. This included:

- Strengthening security controls ahead of the Census.
- Testing the use of ABS desktops on cloud infrastructure to efficiently meet spikes in short-term demand that would otherwise strain or exceed local capacity.
- Conducting a pilot study on the appropriate design of flexible working arrangements, with the results shared widely across the Australian Public Service (APS).
- Using machine intelligence and data visualisations to improve internal analysis of trade data and automate the generation of trade statistics reports.
- Refreshing the ABS Work Health and Safety system and updating safety guidelines and processes.
- Securing an additional office in Geelong to support the growing data collection work program.

Towards 2025

The ABS planned and prepared for opportunities and challenges ahead during 2020-21. The Australian Government provided additional base funding in the 2020-21 Federal Budget of \$74 million per annum, ongoing from 2021-22. Returning to a sustainable budget position ensures the ABS can continue to deliver the current high-quality and trusted economic, population, and social statistics, and develop innovative ways to produce and enhance these statistics in the future. Over time, it will allow the ABS to deliver more public value, improve the resilience of ICT systems, and enhance the security of critical data assets.

The ABS also received funding to:

- Adopt new technologies and approaches to develop a set of monthly economic indicators: Business Turnover (using business activity statements data); Employee Earnings (using an expanded range of STP data); and Household Spending (using bank debit/credit card payments and supermarket scanner data).
- Develop an investment business case, based on a series of trials, to reduce regulatory burden for Australian

- Develop an investment business case, based on a series of trials, to reduce regulatory burden for Australian businesses. The trials aim to reduce burden by:
 - working with selected large businesses to co-design more streamlined and automated data submission processes
 - introducing reporting via systems already used by small and medium businesses such as business accounting software
 - using data already available to the ABS to reduce the impost on businesses that also provide information to other APS agencies.
- Partner with the Bureau of Meteorology, CSIRO, and Geoscience Australia to establish the Australian Climate Service. The service aims to help Government better understand the threats posed by a changing climate and natural hazards.

The ABS also:

- Developed a new Enterprise Strategy for 2021 to 2025 to best position the ABS to take advantage of changes in the Australian data landscape; set out our strategic priorities, and identify the shifts required to take our high-functioning organisation and make it even stronger.
- Developed the ABS Data Strategy that articulates actions to maximise the value of data across the ABS.
- Reviewed the statistical work program, including the products released in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and took decisions to ensure the program continues to meet information needs with the resources available.

Acknowledgements

I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the commitment, professionalism, and capability of the skilled staff of the ABS, and to thank the Australian people for their ongoing support and trust in the ABS. Without their participation as respondents to our surveys we would not be able to produce the information that shapes Australia's important decisions.

The ABS works with many national, state, and territory agencies that provide us with data, which are critical inputs to our statistics. This is alongside the work we do with national statistics offices around the world. The contributions of each of these organisations is significant and we thank all these partners.

I thank Professor Gary Banks AO, Chair of the Australian Statistics Advisory Council, and the Council members for their advice, insights, and ongoing support. The ABS is also grateful for the considered contributions from the members of our other specialist advisory groups.

I also acknowledge the support of our Minister, the Hon Michael Sukkar MP.

Dr David Gruen

Australian Statistician



531
statistical
releases for the
financial year

15,520
DataLab
sessions



6,444
registered
TableBuilder
users



15,187,394
ABS website
sessions

11,429,244
calls to ABS application
programming interface (API) service



ABS social media followers – **Total 260,149**



121,271
Facebook



81,708
Twitter



43,349
LinkedIn



12,133
Instagram



1,688
YouTube

As at 30 June 2021 for previous 12 months

Purpose and plan

The ABS purpose is to inform Australia’s important decisions by delivering relevant, trusted, and objective data, statistics, and insights.

To achieve its purpose during 2020–21, the ABS focused on four objectives to meet Australia’s contemporary and emerging statistical needs:

- 1. Produce high-quality statistics
- 2. Improve access to ABS statistics
- 3. Reduce burden on data providers
- 4. Produce new statistics and data.

The ABS is Australia’s national statistics office, providing trusted official statistics on a wide range of economic, social, population, and environmental matters of importance to Australia.

The ABS works collaboratively with other government entities to maximise the use of public data for statistical purposes and improve the Australian Government’s data capability. The ABS advises official bodies on producing and using data and statistics, formulates standards, works with state and territory governments, and liaises internationally.

The ABS produces a corporate plan annually to document its objectives over a four-year period. It describes the operating environment, lists key activities, and provides performance measures and targets used to report performance each financial year. A copy of the [ABS Corporate Plan 2020–21](#) can be found on the ABS website.

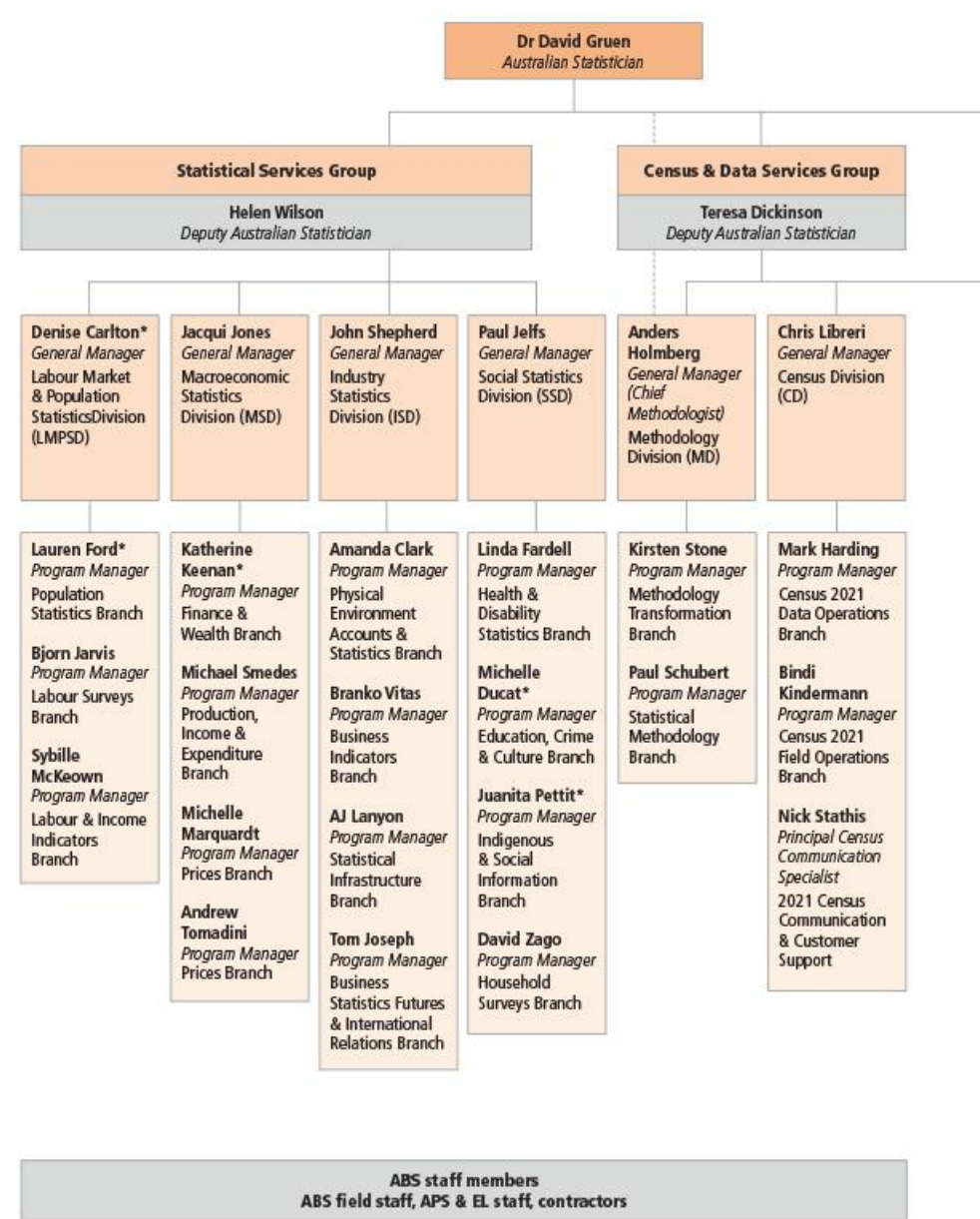
Accountable authority and organisational structure

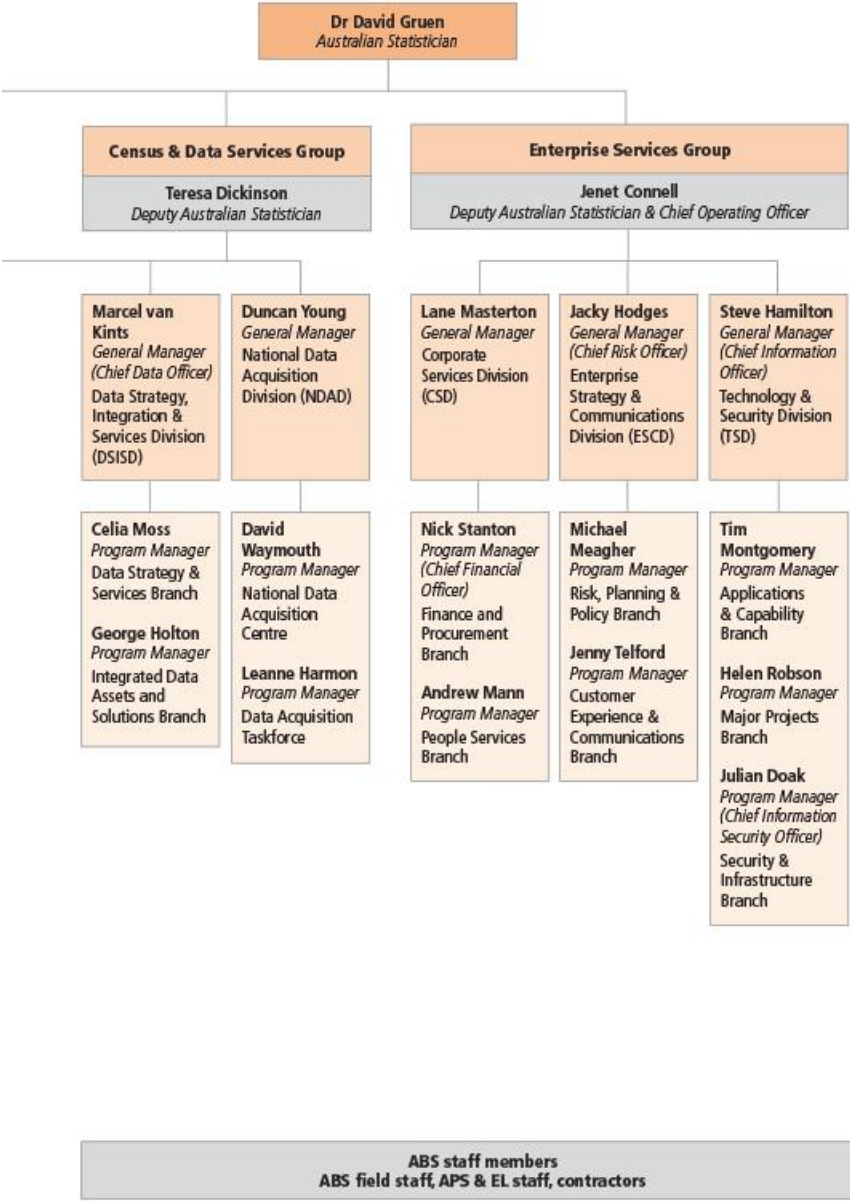
The ABS is led by the Australian Statistician – a statutory office established by the [Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975](#).

Dr David Gruen was the Australian Statistician, and therefore the accountable authority for the ABS, throughout 2020–21. Dr Gruen was first appointed to the position on 11 December 2019.

The ABS is supported by a dynamic and responsive organisation (see Figure 2.1), comprising statistical, corporate, and data services that enable the agency to deliver its role and functions.

Figure 2.1: Organisational chart at 30 June 2021





*Acting, temporary or contractor

Responsible Minister

The ABS is an independent statutory authority within the Treasury portfolio and operates as part of the Australian Government. The ABS is accountable to the Parliament and ultimately the public through the Treasury Ministers, the Parliamentary Committee process, and the tabling of its annual report.

During 2020–21, the Hon Michael Sukkar MP, Assistant Treasurer, Minister for Housing, and Minister for Homelessness, Social and Community Housing, was responsible for the ABS.



The Hon Michael Sukkar MP, Federal Member for Deakin, Assistant Treasurer, Minister for Housing, Minister for Homelessness, Social and Community Housing

ABS Portfolio Budget Statement outcome and program

The ABS Portfolio Budget Statement outlines a single outcome and a single program for the agency:

Outcome 1

- Decisions on important matters made by governments, business, and the broader community are informed by objective, relevant, and trusted official statistics produced through the collection and integration of data, its analysis, and the provision of statistical information.

Program 1.1 – Australian Bureau of Statistics

- This program contributes to the outcome through delivery of high-quality statistical information to inform Australia's most important issues and through engaging with users within government, business, and the community to ensure they have the confidence in the statistical resources available to enable them to make informed decisions.

During 2020–21, the ABS was a trusted provider of high-quality and timely data and statistics. It delivered 531 statistics publications across key economic, population, social, and environment areas. Core economic and population statistics met the standard set by the International Monetary Fund. The ABS annual performance statement for 2020–21 is provided in the [Annual performance statement](#).

The ABS Portfolio Budget Statement, which outlines the organisation's outcome, program, and deliverables, is available on the [Treasury website](#)².

Special article 1: Building data capability through the Data Profession

The 2019 Independent Review of the Australian Public Service (APS) found it needed to make better use of data to deliver outstanding service. The Review recommended the establishment of human resources (HR), digital, and data professions.

In September 2020 the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) appointed Dr David Gruen, Australian Statistician, as the inaugural Head of Data Profession and launched the Data Professional Stream. The Data Professional Stream aims to ensure the APS workforce has the data capabilities required to harness the unprecedented growth in the availability and value of data. The better use of data will help ensure policies are evidence-based, service delivery is citizen-centric, and programs are innovative.

The initial two-year work plan for the Data Professional Stream has been co-designed with HR and data leaders from 25 Australian Government agencies, including the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) and Digital Transformation Agency (DTA) that are leading the establishment of the HR and Digital Professional Streams respectively. The program has been co-designed to deliver value for all types and sizes of APS agencies, and to be sustainably embedded within the APS.

The ABS is leading projects to improve the attraction, recruitment, development, and retention of data professionals within the APS, as well as uplift the data literacy of all staff across the APS. The ABS is also collaborating with partner agencies on priority initiatives:

- **APS data graduate recruitment program** - the ABS is leading a recruitment program for highly capable data graduates for positions commencing in 2022. This is the largest specialised graduate program run in the APS with over 2,400 applications for data analyst, data scientist, and statistical methodologist roles across more than 20 APS agencies.
- **Data Capability Framework** - the ABS is leading an initiative to describe the capabilities required to use data effectively. This framework will provide a single source of information for all APS staff for data capabilities.
- **Development of data roles and role descriptions** - the ATO is leading an initiative to describe key data roles (such as data analyst, data scientist, and data governance officer), and the capabilities and proficiencies required for these roles. The role descriptions will complement the Data Capability Framework.
- **Immersive learning** - the ABS is leading an initiative to share data expertise and grow the data capability of individuals and agencies.
- **Data literacy learning pathways** - Services Australia is leading a project to build foundational data capabilities in all APS staff. This project will increase confidence and ability of APS staff to use data and analytics to inform decisions and communicate insights. As a first step, a cross-agency team has developed an APS Data Literacy Toolkit to support agencies in planning their data literacy uplift.
- **Data capability development of the Senior Executive Service (SES)** - the Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources is updating SES role descriptions to include expectations for data use and management. In parallel, the ABS is collaborating with the Australian National University to deliver a short course to provide SES, who are not data professionals, with the skills and confidence for using data to support their leadership.

As the Data Profession program enters its second year, the ABS will continue to collaborate with our partners, including the APSC, ATO, and DTA, to embed the projects underway within the APS and establish a sustainable future for the program.

Special article 2: Meeting changing user needs with modern technology and non-survey data sources

For over 115 years, the ABS has undertaken surveys and delivered high-quality statistics to inform Australia's important decisions. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit Australia in early 2020, the ABS needed to continue producing the high-quality statistics that businesses, governments, and the community rely upon.

The ABS needed to produce new and near real-time information about the economic and social impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic to support informed decision-making. To produce more timely information, the ABS accelerated the modernisation of data collection activities and sought alternate data sources, particularly big data¹, from both public and private providers.

The ABS secured:

1. Single Touch Payroll (STP) data from the Australian Tax Office (ATO) to produce weekly jobs and wages statistics
2. de-identified, aggregate credit/debit card and payments data from banks to quickly understand changes in household spending
3. transactions data from large retailers to understand the products households were purchasing during the pandemic. This data complemented supermarket scanner data the ABS has collected since 2014 to produce components of the Consumer Price Index.

The ABS used its evolving suite of cloud-based information and communication technology (ICT) services to acquire, store, and analyse STP, bank, and retail transactions data. Cloud-based ICT services are scalable to handle these big datasets, support modern programming languages and analytical techniques, and provide robust data protection controls.

Using big data and cloud technology, the ABS developed new monthly indicators to inform economic policy, including:

- *Business Turnover* using business activity statements data
- *Employee Earnings* using an expanded range of STP data
- *Household Spending* using bank credit/debit card and payments data, and transactions data from large Australian retailers.

These monthly indicators provide timely insights on the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on businesses and households, and the impact of government policy. The monthly indicators will help chart the road to Australia's economic recovery.

By adopting cloud computing and improving the ABS' capability to use big data, the ABS has a path to replace many of its ageing ICT systems that are not considered fit for future purpose.

Footnotes

1. Big data refers to 'data that contains greater variety, arriving in increasing volumes and with more velocity. This is also known as the three Vs.' <https://www.oracle.com/au/big-data/what-is-big-data/>[↵]

Special article 3: Implications of government COVID-19 pandemic policies on statistics and classifications

The economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic led to the fastest and largest fiscal stimulus program in Australian history. An unprecedented number of individual policy interventions were announced by the Commonwealth, state, and territory governments to support households and businesses.

The ABS had to ensure all policies were appropriately classified and measured in Australia's economic statistics. The ABS classified over 1,000 individual policies during 2020–21. This compares to just 14 classifications in 2019–20.

In April 2020, the ABS established a COVID-19 pandemic response team to analyse and classify these policies. The team focussed exclusively on the classification of policies, leaving data processing staff to focus on delivering more timely statistics during the pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic response team met regularly with public sector data providers, including the Commonwealth Department of Finance and state and territory treasuries, to discuss the classification of policies in Government Finance Statistics source data. The ABS published decisions on the classification of policies on the ABS website to aid economic analysis and policy development.

Within the ABS, extensive engagement was undertaken between subject matter experts to seek agreement on the appropriate classification of policies. The ABS set up a new forum to support timely decisions for classifying new policies and monitoring the methods used for economic statistics. The forum met as often as required, usually weekly, to endorse conceptual and methodological issues as the COVID-19 pandemic evolved.

Once the classification of a government policy was agreed, the ABS ensured it consistently collected and compiled any data from businesses receiving the support. A group of experts from statistical production areas across the ABS identified:

- The range of businesses impacted by a policy, the surveys they would receive, and how COVID-19 pandemic support would be recorded in business accounts.
- The changes needed to questions in surveys or to guidance material sent with surveys. For example, the ABS provided new guidance for respondents to enable accurate reporting of JobKeeper payments in the Average Weekly Earnings survey questionnaire.

The economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic will be long-lasting and government support will likely persist in the short-to-medium term. In response, the ABS has established a Public Sector Classifications and Standards team to continue to ensure it can classify decisions quickly and coherently across ABS economic statistics.

The ABS will prioritise regular engagement with affected stakeholders to ensure classifications are accurate, and users understand how government policies in Australia are being classified, measured, and reported in ABS economic statistics.

Introductory Statement

As the accountable authority for the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), I present the 2020–21 annual performance statement of the ABS, as required under paragraph 39(1)(a) and (b) of the [Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013](#) (PGPA Act). In my opinion, based on advice from ABS management and the Audit and Risk Committee, this performance statement accurately reflects the performance of the ABS against the performance criteria included in its [Portfolio Budget Statement \(PBS\)](#) and the [ABS Corporate Plan](#), and fully complies with subsection 39(2) of the PGPA Act.

Signed



Dr David Gruen

Australian Statistician

ABS purpose

The ABS purpose is to inform Australia's important decisions by delivering relevant, trusted, and objective data, statistics, and insights.

Results

This statement presents the results against the performance criteria from the ABS PBS 2020–21 and performance measures from the [ABS Corporate Plan 2020–21](#) for the period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021. All results relate to one program in the Treasury PBS: [1.1 Australian Bureau of Statistics](#):

Outcome 1

Decisions on important matters made by governments, business, and the broader community are informed by objective, relevant, and trusted official statistics produced through the collection and integration of data, its analysis, and the provision of statistical information.

Program 1.1 – Australian Bureau of Statistics

This program contributes to the outcome through delivery of high-quality statistical information to inform Australia’s most important issues and through engaging with users within government, business, and the community to ensure they have the confidence in the statistical resources available to enable them to make informed decisions.

Summary of results by Objective

The overall results for each Objective were:

- **Objective 1 – Produce high-quality statistics:** Two measures were fully achieved; one measure was substantially achieved.
- **Objective 2 – Improve access to ABS statistics:** One measure was not assessed on the basis the 2020–21 data has been used to establish a benchmark for assessing achievement in future years.
- **Objective 3 – Reduce burden on data providers:** One measure was not assessed on the basis the 2020–21 data has been used to establish a benchmark for assessing achievement in future years; one measure was fully achieved.
- **Objective 4 – Produce new statistics and data:** One measure was fully achieved.

Measure scale

The following measure scale was used to assess each individual method and measure:

	Single method	Multiple methods
Full achievement	Result was 100% of the target.	All results were 100% of the target.
Substantial achievement	Result was greater than or equal to 66% but less than 100% of the target.	The lowest result was greater than or equal to 66% but less than 100% of the target.
Partial achievement	Result was greater than or equal to 33% but less than 66% of the target.	The lowest result was greater than or equal to 33% but less than 66% of the target.
Limited or no achievement	Result was less than 33% of the target.	The lowest result was less than 33% of the target.
Not assessed	Result not available due to the frequency of the testing, unavailability of information, or establishing a benchmark.	Result not available due to the frequency of the testing, unavailability of information, or establishing a benchmark.

Objective 1

Produce high-quality statistics¹

ABS data and statistics inform important decisions made by governments, business, and the wider community. They underpin sound fiscal and monetary policies and inform the delivery of programs and services vital to the health and wellbeing of Australians. The ABS also produces statistics on the health and educational engagement of Australians, the cost of living, housing, environmental management, and the use of energy in Australia.

ABS data and statistics also support a strong well-functioning democracy. ABS data contributes to fair electoral boundaries by accurately showing the relative population growth of communities in different locations and changing population densities. Just as importantly, ABS statistics provide accurate information on a range of matters critical to public debate.

The detailed ABS statistical work program for 2020–21 is provided in the [ABS Forward Work Program](#)².

Performance against this objective in 2020–21 was assessed by three performance measures:

- **1.1 Trust in ABS Statistics** - level of trust in the ABS and its statistics
- **1.2 International compliance** - ABS statistics meet standards for National and International Accounts, Labour Force, Unemployment, Consumer Price Index, and Estimates of Resident Population
- **1.3 Conduct the Census** - implementation of the Census to deliver trusted Census data

For 2020–21, measures 1.2 and 1.3 were assessed as **fully achieved**. Measure 1.1 was assessed as **substantially achieved**. Further explanation related to these measures is provided below.

Measure 1.1 Trust in ABS statistics - level of trust in the ABS and its statistics
Overall result: Substantial achievement of target

Context: A high level of trust in the ABS underpins the confidence of households, businesses, and other data suppliers to provide the vital information needed to produce Australia’s official statistics. Without trust in both the institution and the statistics produced, the ABS could not maintain its high levels of survey response rates.

Maintaining trust ensures that ABS statistics are high-quality, timely, and continue to be the preferred evidence base for Australia’s important decisions.

Community trust in the quality, timeliness, and integrity of ABS statistics remains high. In the first half of 2020, the ABS commissioned an external and independent research agency (Engine Group) to conduct the five-yearly [Community Trust in ABS Statistics Survey \(CTASS\)](#)². Its purpose is to measure the levels of trust in the ABS and its products among the general community and informed users of ABS statistics. The CTASS will next be conducted in 2024–25.

Method 1: Community Trust in ABS Statistics Survey (CTASS)	Target 1: At least 85% level of trust in ABS and ABS statistics
Result: Not assessed as the CTASS was not undertaken in 2020–21. It is a five-yearly survey, last undertaken in 2019–20.	
Method 2: Number of statistics released free of significant errors ^(a)	Target 2: 100% of statistics are released free of significant errors
Result: Substantial achievement of target. For the period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021, 99.4% of statistics were released free of significant errors.	

(a) An error is significant if it could mislead a user in relation to the value of a statistical indicator of national or state importance. In 2020-21, the ABS corrected all errors on the same day as the release and corrected most significant errors within 2 hours of being detected.

more than 2 hours of being selected.

Analysis: Between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2021, there were 531 statistical releases published to the ABS website, an increase of 38 releases (8%) on the previous financial year. This increase related to new statistics to help users understand the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

During 2020–21, three releases, equating to less than 1% were published with a significant error. In each case, the ABS updated the data published on the website as soon as the error was identified and made this transparent to users. This low percentage of error demonstrates the continued high quality of ABS statistical releases.

Measure 1.2 International compliance – ABS statistics meets standards for National and International Accounts, Labour Force, Unemployment, Consumer Price Index, and Estimates of Resident Population
Overall result: Full achievement of target

Context: The ABS has continued to produce key economic and population statistics with appropriate coverage, frequency, and timeliness as independently assessed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) against the [Special Data Dissemination Standard \(SDDS\)](#) . Achievement against this standard is the ABS’ overarching performance criterion from its PBS.

The reputation of the ABS is based on the continued provision of quality statistics that meet expected standards. Adherence to the independent IMF standard engenders a high degree of credibility in ABS statistics. The results of the IMF assessment provide users with the ability to objectively compare Australia’s statistical capability and capacity with international counterparts. ABS official statistics adhere to published Australian and international standards which are available on the ABS website.

The ABS reports annually to the IMF on its compliance with the SDDS. Based on the material the ABS provides, the IMF publishes a [summary of observance](#) against the SDDS standard on its website. This measure has therefore been assessed using information published on the IMF website.

Method: Compliance with IMF SDDS	Target: IMF assess ABS to be 100% compliant with SDDS for in-scope collections
Result: Full achievement of target. The IMF has assessed Australia's data provision as compliant with the SDDS across all categories.	

Analysis: Australia has subscribed to the SDDS since April 1996 and has maintained its adherence and compliance to date.

Compliance relates directly to the ABS’ ability to release key economic and population statistics with appropriate coverage, frequency, and timeliness set by the standard. These key statistics comprise national and international accounts, including the Balance of Payments, labour force, Consumer Price Index, and population estimates.

Measure 1.3 Conduct the Census - implementation of the Census to deliver trusted Census data
Overall result: Full achievement of target

Context: Every five years, the ABS counts every person and home in Australia by undertaking the Census of Population and Housing (the Census). The Census is a legislated obligation under the [Census and Statistics Act 1905](#) .

The Census is the most comprehensive snapshot of the country and tells the story of how Australia and its people are changing. It includes approximately 10 million households and over 25 million people. Census data provides a rich and valuable insight into the economic, social, and cultural make-up of the country by asking questions about a range of topics.

The Census is a major undertaking. Planning for the next Census begins even before all activities for the last Census have ended. Each Census is implemented over a five-year period and as such, the targets for this measure in the ABS Corporate Plan change each year to reflect the timing of the Census.

ABS Corporate Plan change each year to reflect the major phases of Census.

Method: Successful completion of the 2020 Census Test	Target: 2020 Census Test is completed, and the evaluation report agreed and accepted by the Census governance forum
Result: Full achievement of target. The 2020 Census Test was conducted in late 2020. The evaluation report was presented to and accepted by the Census Delivery Committee on 17 February 2021 and the Census Executive Board on 17 March 2021.	

Analysis: For 2020–21, ABS' progress toward the 2021 Census was measured through the completion of the Census Test.

The Census Test in 2020 was undertaken to help ensure the Census in 2021 would be easy for people to complete, confirm that Census processes work, and that the Census form captured information accurately. The running of the test, and its results, built confidence in the Census’ people, vendors, systems, and processes. It provided critical input to finalise planning and preparations for the Census which was conducted on Tuesday 10 August 2021.

Footnotes

1. ABS Corporate Plan 2020—21, Objectives and Key Activities, <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/1005.0~2020-21~Main%20Features~Objectives%20and%20Key%20Activities~7>, and Performance Information, [https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20 Subject/1005.0~2020-21~Main%20Features~Performance%20Information~8](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/1005.0~2020-21~Main%20Features~Performance%20Information~8)[↵](#)
2. In the 2020 CTASS, 87% of the general community respondents who had heard of the ABS trust or greatly trust the ABS.[↵](#)

Objective 2

Improve access to ABS statistics¹

ABS data and statistics are a valuable national asset. There are many users of ABS data and statistics including government entities, local councils, public and not-for-profit organisations, academics, researchers, students, businesses, and local community groups. The ABS is committed to improving access, while ensuring privacy and confidentiality is maintained.

Performance against this objective was assessed by one performance measure:

- **2.1 Access to ABS data and statistics** – access to data products and services

For 2020–21, measure 2.1 was rated as **not assessed** on the basis that the data for this reference period has established a benchmark for assessing achievement in future years. Further explanation related to this measure is provided in the [ABS Corporate Plan 2020–21](#).

Measure 2.1 Access to ABS data and statistics - access to data products and services
Overall result: Not assessed - benchmarking year

Context: The ABS is a trusted provider of information, enabling its users to access data to support research and evaluation of public policy issues without compromising privacy and confidentiality. ABS data products and services provide valuable and timely insights, and support analysis across a range of economic and social dimensions to inform policy makers, businesses, and other sectors of the community.

During 2020–21, DataLab remained a leading platform for users to access ABS microdata, while the use of the application programming interface (API) service has continued to increase. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the ABS maintained the continuity of these services to satisfy the ongoing demand for the most up-to-date statistical information. Access to ABS data has allowed external users to independently measure and assess the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and support an evidence-based approach to response and recovery.

Users of ABS statistics continued to access a wide range of data and statistics for free on the ABS website or by configuring their systems to an API. Machine-to-machine access provides a fast avenue for regular users to import data into their systems. In September 2020, the ABS released its new website, making it easier for users to find and access information produced by the ABS.

Method: Composite index of channel access: Calls to an API service Number of DataLab sessions ^(a) Invoices for customised data services Count of ABS website sessions ^(b) Registered users of TableBuilder ^(c)	Target: Index benchmark (100)
Result: Not assessed – benchmark has been established. Index benchmark established (value: 100).	

(a) Sessions with a duration of 3 minutes or more.

(b) The ABS Corporate Plan 2020–21 used the term ‘hits’ to describe website activity – the correct term is ‘sessions’, which has been used within this statement.

(c) New users in this reporting year.

Analysis: The ABS continues to make it easier to access its data products and services, and has increased and diversified the access channels available to its users over recent years. The ABS has previously used specific performance measures for different data access channels. These measures informed our strategies for improving user experience and have guided our understanding of different pathways for users.

The ABS is committed to improving access to statistics through a range of avenues. The new composite index gives a balanced indication of performance and smooths the effect of single-channel fluctuations. This is particularly important as new methods for providing access, such as APIs, replace other access methods, such as TableBuilder.

ABS Data APIs enable fast access to ABS statistics. Data API calls return statistics in a machine friendly format so that users can integrate data into their systems as it is released. The total usage of ABS Data APIs continued to trend upwards in 2020–21, with a total of 11,429,244 calls to API services.

The ABS increased promotion of the **DataLab** in 2020–21 and lifted DataLab sessions up to 15,520 for the period. The number of sessions is substantially higher than 2019–20.

Customised data requests in 2020–21 totalled 2,010. These requests are typically initiated by government and private sector organisations, as well as international bodies (such as the United Nations and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) under the Australian Government's Treaty Obligations. Requests for customised data increased across all topic areas in 2020–21. The largest overall increase was in International Trade in Commodities data (up by 16% since last year).

The ABS launched a **new website** in the second half of 2020 and reduced the number of pages on the ABS website. Website usage is now being measured using website sessions² rather than page views, as this provides a more meaningful way to represent usage. There were 15,187,394 website sessions recorded for 2020–21. The new website helps users to find data more quickly and easily, reducing the time and effort required to navigate to the information they need. In 2020–21, the number of unique users visiting the website was 8,646,722, representing a 4.3% increase from last year.

The **TableBuilder**³ product has provided access to both simple and more customised data for over 10 years. During this time there have been more than 100,000 registered users of the product. While TableBuilder is still heavily used by governments, universities and businesses, new registrations in 2020–21 totalled just 6,444. The number of new registrations is lower than the previous year due to the ageing Census dataset in TableBuilder.⁴ Decreased use of this channel was predicted ahead of the introduction of newer products, such as the API service. TableBuilder continues to provide a reliable and well-recognised means of accessing simple data for free.

Footnotes

1. ABS Corporate Plan 2020–21, Objectives and Key Activities, <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/1005.0~2020-21~Main%20Features~Objectives%20and%20Key%20Activities~7>, and Performance Information, [https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20 Subject/1005.0~2020-21~Main%20Features~Performance%20Information~8](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/1005.0~2020-21~Main%20Features~Performance%20Information~8)[↵]
2. Website sessions capture a group of user interactions with the ABS website that take place within a given time frame.[↵]
3. Access to data in TableBuilder Basic is open to anyone, whilst use of TableBuilder Pro incurs a fee.[↵]
4. Due to internal system limitations, the ABS was unable to report against the number of new registrations for TableBuilder or the number of customised data requests for 2019-20.[↵]

Objective 3

Reduce burden on data providers¹

The ABS has been actively reducing the burden on data providers over the past decade. The ABS is committed to:

- improving engagement with data providers, reducing the time required to complete surveys, and reducing the number of surveys a single business or household is selected for each year
- increasing its use of big data, including data collected by government and the private sector, to reduce the need to conduct surveys.

The ABS is implementing new online survey forms to reduce the effort required by businesses and individuals providing data and enable them to respond more quickly to data requests.

Performance against this objective was assessed by two performance measures:

- **3.1: Burden on survey respondents** – time taken to complete business surveys
- **3.2: Efficiency of statistical operations** – improve efficiency with which data is collected

For 2020–21, measure 3.1 was rated as **not assessed** on the basis that the data for this reference period has established a benchmark for assessing achievement in future years. Measure 3.2 was rated as **fully achieved**. Further explanation related to these measures is provided below.

Measure 3.1 Burden on survey respondents - time taken to complete business surveys
Overall result: Not assessed – benchmarking year

Context: The Government’s deregulation agenda aims to reduce the barriers affecting Australia’s productivity growth and competitiveness. It will also make sure regulations are well-designed, fit-for-purpose, and support businesses to grow and create jobs. Reducing the regulatory burden on business is a priority, particularly in a post-COVID economic recovery context. The Government expects the ABS to look for opportunities to reduce compliance costs for businesses and has funded it to deliver several deregulation initiatives, such as streamlining and automating data submission processes for large businesses.

The ABS is constantly reviewing data collection methods to minimise the effort required by businesses providing data and enabling them to respond more quickly to data requests. The ABS’ current approach to reducing burden is well regarded internationally, with many of its strategies adopted by other National Statistical Organisations.

While the ABS’ future collection strategy will focus on big data, as the primary source, there will always be a need to collect data directly from businesses to fill gaps and validate administrative data.²³

Method: Time taken (in hours) for survey respondents to complete business surveys ^(a)	Target: No target – establish benchmark
Result: Not assessed – benchmark has been established. For the period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021, the time taken to complete business surveys was 338,964 hours. This result is the benchmark against which future performance will be assessed.	

(a) The method for this measure has been refined to align with other respondent burden reporting (i.e. to the Government) which uses ‘total’ hours of burden rather than the ‘average’ number of hours per business survey. Burden is reported to the hour, and so reference to minutes has also been removed.

Analysis: The ABS collects information from a selection of over 2.4 million Australian businesses. In 2020–21, 338,964 hours of user burden was recorded from 43 business surveys.⁴ As an example, it takes approximately 5 hours a year for small to medium businesses (SMEs) and 8 hours for a large business to complete the Business Indicators Survey.

The ABS is reducing burden on businesses by making it easier and quicker to provide data. For example, the ABS has made changes to the 2020–21 Agricultural Census which are expected to reduce the average completion time

has made changes to the 2020-21 Agricultural Census which are expected to reduce the average completion time by more than half (45 minutes compared to 2 hours in 2015-16).

In addition, the ABS has recently completed a feasibility study under the Government's deregulation agenda on enabling SMEs to report data using existing mechanisms such as business accounting software. This would reduce the time it takes an SME to complete an ABS survey. The results of this study have been reported back to Government for further action.

The ABS used a range of methods, including data integration, administrative data, and sampling techniques, to reduce duplication across its collections and limit burden on both households and business. The ABS limits the period each individual business is in a sample for repeating business surveys; minimises the number of different ABS surveys for which the same business is selected; and minimises the chance that households are selected in more than one ABS survey. The ABS partners with other Government agencies to use existing data to supplement (and therefore shorten) surveys, and with commercial entities to source transaction data (e.g. supermarket scanner data used to produce the Consumer Price Index) to substitute for surveys where possible.

Measure 3.2 Efficiency of statistical operations - improve efficiency with which data is collected
Overall result: Full achievement of target

Context: The ABS continually improves the efficiency of statistical operations. The ABS is committed to improving access to its data and products and reducing burden on businesses and households that respond to surveys. The ABS has collaborated with other entities and harnessed new technologies to improve the ease with which providers and users engage with the ABS.

Sometimes the ABS collects the same information as one or more of its partners. The ABS cooperates with partners to streamline collections and reduce the duplicated content. This cooperation delivers better managed and less burdensome collections.

The ABS improves its flagship data integration services so data linkage products are more intuitive and outputs are more relevant to user needs.

Method: Case studies showing efficiencies made in collecting data for statistical purposes.	Case studies: 1. Combining reporting requirements to reduce burden and duplication - ABS use of Economic and Financial Statistics data to replace some components of the Quarterly Business Indicators Survey. 2. Modernisation of the methodology used for Business Longitudinal Analysis Data Environment (BLADE). This new high-quality business linkage infrastructure will provide more timely integration of data, quarterly business activity statement updates, and richer data.
Result: Full achievement of target.	

See [Case study 1 \(Measure 3.2\)](#) and [Case study 2 \(Measure 3.2\)](#).

Analysis: The ABS reduces burden on data providers and users by making the collection and use of statistics and data more efficient.

Case study 1 provides insight into the ABS' partnership with the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA), the Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA), and the finance industry to modernise the collection of financial data. The outcome of this collaboration is reduced duplication of reporting for relevant financial entities, improved key provider management, and streamlined data quality assurance.

Case study 2 showcases the outcomes of enhancements to the BLADE product, including new and updated

administrative data sources, as well as improvement to underlying data linkage methodologies. As a result, BLADE now features an expanded range of timely data, and improved efficiency of the data linkage process.

Footnotes

1. ABS Corporate Plan 2020–21, Objectives and Key Activities, <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/1005.0~2020-21~Main%20Features~Objectives%20and%20Key%20Activities~7>, and Performance Information, [https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20 Subject/1005.0~2020-21~Main%20Features~Performance%20Information~8](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/1005.0~2020-21~Main%20Features~Performance%20Information~8) [↵](#)
2. Big data refers to ‘data that contains greater variety, arriving in increasing volumes and with more velocity. This is also known as the three Vs.’ <https://www.oracle.com/au/big-data/what-is-big-data/> [↵](#)
3. Administrative data is information collected by government agencies, businesses, or organisations for various purposes, including registrations, transactions, and record keeping, usually during the delivery of a service. [↵](#)
4. Total time taken for each business survey has been allocated to a financial year based on the due date for that collection – that is, the date that the survey was due to be completed by, not the reference period to which the survey relates. Some business survey areas within the ABS were not able to provide time taken estimates (for surveys conducted late in the financial year) in time for inclusion in this benchmark. A time taken value for these surveys has been estimated based on previously reported values. Surveys that are conducted across multiple financial years will be apportioned across reference periods. [↵](#)

Objective 4

Produce new statistics and data¹

The ABS engages with key stakeholders to ensure its data and statistics meet their needs. Last financial year, the ABS rapidly produced new statistical products to meet the critical demands of government and business for health, employment, consumer spending and other relevant information during the COVID-19 pandemic. This effort was welcomed by stakeholders and continued this year.

As the primary integrating authority, the ABS is also investing in new ways of integrating data and using new sources to produce statistical products to meet changing demands. This will continue to address important social, environmental, economic, health, and other issues.

Performance against this objective was assessed by one performance measure.

- **4.1 Stakeholder impact** – new statistics or methods are used by customers to inform high-priority areas or policy directions.

For 2020–21, measure 4.1 was assessed as **fully achieved**. Further explanation related to the rating for this measure is provided below.

Measure 4.1 Stakeholder impact - new statistics or methods are used by customers to inform high-priority areas or policy directions
Overall result: Full achievement of target

Context: Administrative and big data is information collected by governments or other organisations to implement their programs and deliver services. Data integration and increased sharing of administrative and big data has the potential to deliver new statistical insights which address current and emerging policy questions across a wide range of economic, social, and environmental issues.

Several projects using new ABS statistics and methods have contributed directly to government policy decisions, including the response to, and recovery from, the COVID-19 pandemic. Examples include improving insights into Australia’s trade performance and labour market, development of a labour market tracker data asset, producing jurisdiction-level insights into employment and industry performance through data linkage, and informing the allocation of school funding. The production of these new statistics and methods has enabled policy makers to respond to a range of challenges in the economy and broader environment.

In addition to maximising the value from new statistics emerging from data integration projects, the ABS routinely undertakes exploration of alternative data sources (such as non-survey data), production of experimental estimates, and creation of satellite accounts (a mechanism for reusing and combining existing information to provide a new perspective). These new sources and methods provide novel insights into existing data that can be used to better understand emerging issues and respond effectively to future information requirements.

Method: Case studies showing the outcomes of new statistics or methods used to inform high-priority areas and new policy directions.	Case studies: 1. Implementation and use of COVID-19 household and business surveys. 2. ABS use of de-identified big data to support the NSW Their Futures Matter project. This data will support the evaluation of the effectiveness of public policies and interventions for vulnerable children and young people within NSW and identify characteristics of families and people with poor long-term outcomes.
Result: Full achievement of target.	

See [Case study 3 \(Measure 4.1\)](#) and [Case study 4 \(Measure 4.1\)](#).

Analysis: One of the ways that the ABS supports its clients is through the development of new statistics and data that are used to directly inform priority policy or decisions.

Case study 3 showcases the ABS' ability to rapidly develop and release new products, providing close to real-time data to inform critical decisions. The timely information provided by rapid surveys has informed effective and timely Government policies designed to maintain economic and social relationships and drive economic recovery.

Case study 4 provides insight into how data from the Multi-Agency Data Integration Project (MADIP) has been linked with New South Wales Government datasets to analyse and build predictive models of financial and social outcomes for the state's vulnerable children and young people.

Footnotes

1. ABS Corporate Plan 2020–21, Objectives and Key Activities, <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/1005.0~2020-21~Main%20Features~Objectives%20and%20Key%20Activities~7>, and Performance Information, [https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20 Subject/1005.0~2020-21~Main%20Features~Performance%20Information~8](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/1005.0~2020-21~Main%20Features~Performance%20Information~8)[↩](#)

Case study 1 (Measure 3.2)

Combining reporting requirements to reduce burden and duplication – ABS use of Economic and Financial Statistics data to replace some components of the Quarterly Business Indicators Survey.

The Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA) collects data on behalf of the Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) and the ABS for the financial sector industries they oversee (e.g. banks, building societies, and credit unions).

In partnership with APRA, the RBA, and the finance industry, the ABS worked to modernise the collection of financial data. The first survey forms were introduced in 2002 and had not been comprehensively updated since that time. Key objectives of this project were to significantly improve the information available on financial conditions in Australia, improve data quality, align to current statistical standards and classifications, and reduce burden. The new set of forms and related guidance is called the Economic and Financial Statistics collection. This project was implemented in phases over multiple financial years.

During the development phase, industry consultation highlighted a preference to consolidate other ABS financial sector reporting requirements, such as the collection of wages data, through APRA. The direct collection of wages data from the financial sector had been an ongoing quarterly requirement for the ABS Quarterly [Business Indicators Survey](#) (QBIS).

In 2019–20, Economic and Financial Statistics collection forms (that included the collection of wages) went through rigorous testing, ahead of their incorporation into ABS official statistics. From September quarter 2020, APRA-collected wages data replaced QBIS data and were incorporated into the wages estimates published in Business Indicators, Australia - Quarterly estimates of private sector sales, wages profits, and inventories. Business Indicators wages and salaries are also used in the compilation of compensation of private sector employees in the quarterly estimates of the Australian National Accounts.

This innovation reduced respondent burden and duplication of reporting for those financial entities in QBIS. From an ABS perspective, this improves key provider management and streamlines data quality assurance.

The ABS is reviewing other opportunities for consolidation of reporting through APRA including, for example, capital expenditure and information on international investment.

Case study 2 (Measure 3.2)

Modernisation of the methodology used for Business Longitudinal Analysis Data Environment (BLADE). This new high-quality business linkage infrastructure will provide more timely integration of data, quarterly business activity statement updates, and richer data.

The [Business Longitudinal Analysis Data Environment](#) (BLADE) combines tax, international trade, and intellectual property data with information from ABS surveys. These combined data enable an assessment of the Australian economy and business performance over time. BLADE contains data from the 2001–02 financial year onwards.

BLADE continues to increase the use of non-survey business data (e.g. business activity statement (BAS) data from the Australian Taxation Office), thereby reducing the burden on businesses to provide information to the ABS directly. This shift, alongside continuous improvements to the BLADE, enables the ABS to provide contemporary, relevant, and timely data solutions for a range of government and non-government users.

The value of BLADE was enhanced in 2020–21 through inclusion of new and updated administrative data sources, as well as improvements to BLADE methodologies. These enhancements enable the ABS to better meet client needs, including through improving the efficiency of integrating new datasets to enable more timely analysis.

2020–21 enhancements include:

- Adding quarterly BAS data to complement the annualised data, enabling closer to real-time analysis.
- Six-monthly updates to the Merchandise Imports and Exports data, reducing the time lag of the data down from twelve months.
- A new Australian Business Number (ABN) level frame, enabling users to analyse data using the more commonly recognised ABN method of defining a business, as well as the existing ABS Economics Units model.
- Improved data linking methodology to reduce the time required to integrate new data from three months to six weeks, providing users with access to new datasets in half the time.
- Inclusion of a new business location module which enables BLADE users to undertake more detailed location-based analysis, including analysis of the operating locations of businesses at a Statistical Area 1 level.¹ This detailed business location data is immensely valuable to inform understanding of the impacts of localised events, including natural disasters.

The expanded range of timely data, and improved efficiency of the data linkage process, has enabled valuable insights into the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic during 2020–21 and provided enhanced value to ABS partners in their use of statistics in policy formation and for research.

Gianni La Cava, a Senior Research Manager at the Reserve Bank of Australia, noted that the BLADE now provides the ‘...*ability to quickly dig into the granular data that will help policymakers to better understand the underlying causes of growth in a post-COVID economy.*’

Dr Tala Talgaswatta, a Senior Economist from the Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources observed that, “*Recent enhancements to BLADE ... allow[s] the department to utilise BLADE in a more timely manner. Moreover, the recent inclusion of Merchandise Trade data and location data ... facilitated additional analysis in BLADE to inform the Department’s policies.*”

Professor Kevin Fox, Director, Centre for Applied Economic Research, UNSW Sydney and President, International Association for Research in Income and Wealth has provided the following testimonial. “*The release of BLADE to researchers in government and academia has opened up huge opportunities for conducting policy-relevant research using publicly-held Australian data. The recent pandemic has highlighted the importance of having quality economic data available as quickly as possible ... Recent innovations such as six-monthly updates to trade data and more rapid data integration are key to supporting timely and better-informed policy decisions.*”

The way that they [the ABS] continue to develop offerings through BLADE are of enormous potential benefit to the nation, as they allow researchers to work on Australian data to answer questions relevant for Australian policy.”

Footnotes

1. The Statistical Area 1 (SA1) has generally been designed as the smallest unit for the release of Census data. An SA1 typically has a population of between 200 and 800 people with an average population size of approximately 400 people.[↩](#)

Case study 3 (Measure 4.1)

Implementation and use of COVID-19 household and business surveys

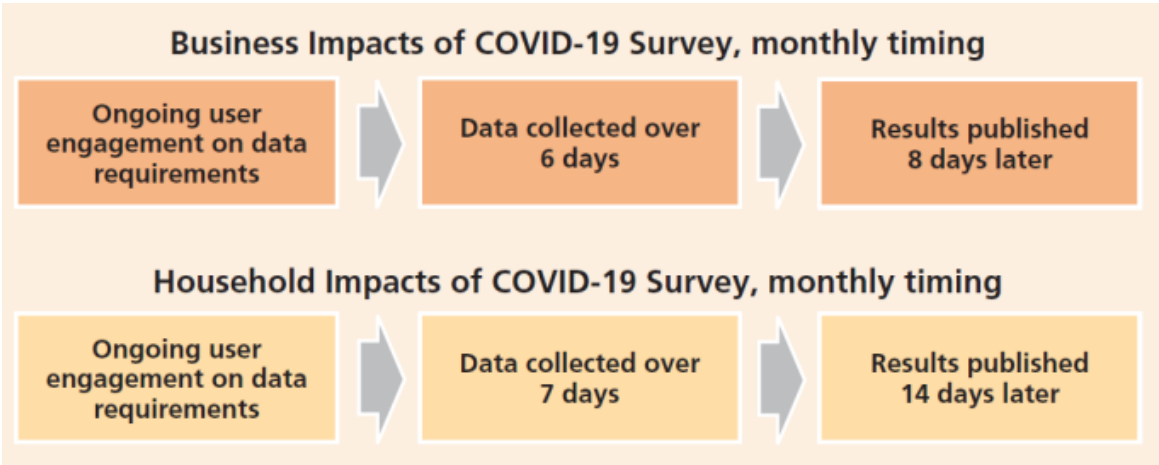
Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the ABS has informed the Government’s response by providing high-quality and timely insights into the social and economic impacts on Australian households and businesses. The ABS’ ability to quickly develop and release new products has meant that close to real-time data has been available to inform critical decisions.

The ABS released a range of new statistics to help understand the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, including two new rapid-response surveys:

- [Household Impacts of COVID-19 Survey](#) – providing a snapshot of the changing social and economic situation for Australian households.
- [Business Impacts of COVID-19 Survey](#) – providing insight into Australian business conditions and sentiments.

Both surveys featured small sample sizes and were designed to provide an indication of sentiments and behaviours rather than in-depth analysis and detailed information. The surveys published information within a month of data collection, enabling users to understand how people and businesses were responding to the rapidly evolving nature of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 1: Business and Household Impacts of COVID-19: Typical monthly timing from user engagement to published results



The ABS co-designed these surveys with Government agencies including the Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet; The Treasury; Reserve Bank of Australia; Department of Health; Department of Social Services; Department of Education, Skills and Employment; Australian Institute of Health and Welfare; and Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources. Additional consultation on the household survey was undertaken with specialists in the health sector and academia.

Priority areas identified by key users

Topics included in the surveys were selected by asking users to identify priority areas for the economic and social conditions faced by businesses and households during the COVID-19 pandemic. These included:

Business Impacts of COVID-19:	Household Impacts of COVID-19:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use and impacts of support measures• Business confidence• Trading status• Business financial situation• Impacts and responses• Workforce• Capital expenditure• Supply chain disruptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use and impacts of support measures• Financial impacts• Community and lifestyle impacts• Behaviours and attitudes• Health and wellbeing indicators• Employment and education impacts• Housing

As the COVID-19 pandemic progressed, the ABS continued to consult with users to adjust the design of the surveys to capture information relevant to changing priorities. Monthly meetings were held to understand how the information was being used, discuss evolving measurement priorities, and identify what additional topics or

questions were required by users to inform policy choices. Feedback from users on our engagement, particularly the ability to co-design the survey questions and topics, was complimentary.

Use of the data - informing new policy directions

The Business and Household Impacts of COVID-19 surveys provided timely insights to directly inform a range of government policies and priorities.

Table 1: A sample of support initiatives informed by the Business and Household Impacts of COVID-19 Surveys

Business Impacts of COVID-19 Survey:	Household Impacts of COVID-19 Survey:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• JobKeeper payment• Boosting cash flow for employers• Loan repayment deferrals• Rent/lease renegotiation• Tax incentives for investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• JobKeeper payment• JobSeeker payment• Coronavirus supplement• Vocational training grants• Telehealth and mental health• Early release of superannuation• Moratorium on evictions and rental freeze• Vaccination policy

Example: JobKeeper payment program

The JobKeeper payment was a wage subsidy for businesses significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The rapid-response surveys provided timely and specific insights to inform development of the policy, track its implementation and understand the effect on the economy.

Figure 2: Timeline of how the Business and Household Impacts of COVID-19 Surveys informed the JobKeeper payment program



The Business and Household Impacts of COVID-19 surveys informed the JobKeeper payment program by:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• assisting the Government to understand how the announcement of the JobKeeper payment influenced business decisions to continue to employ staff• providing the Government with valuable insight regarding intent to register for the program before registrations data was available (April 2020)• providing longitudinal insights into:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– receipt and use of the payment by households (multiple months between April 2020 and March 2021)– changes to the financial position of households due to payments• providing insight into the action businesses expected to take once support initiatives (e.g. JobKeeper) were no longer available, which informed the Government decision to extend the program (July 2020) and anticipated the impacts of the program cessation (March 2021)• assisting the Government to understand business impacts once the program had ended (May 2021)

Key users of the ABS’ Business and Household COVID-19 surveys indicated that the timely information provided by the surveys informed effective and timely policies that were designed to maintain economic and social relationships and drive the economic recovery.

Alistair Campbell, Assistant Secretary at the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet said:

“The ABS’ Household and Business COVID-19 Surveys provided critical information to the Government to inform decision making during the pandemic.

*This timely data helped drive better decisions and outcomes for the Government
and the Australian people."*

Case study 4 (Measure 4.1)

ABS use of de-identified big data to support the *NSW Their Futures Matter* project. This data will support the evaluation of the effectiveness of public policies and interventions for vulnerable children and young people within NSW and identify characteristics of families and people with poor long-term outcomes.

The New South Wales (NSW) Department of Communities and Justice’s (DCJ) project ‘*NSW Their Futures Matter*’ provides an evidence base to inform and evaluate policy decisions that aim to improve the economic, health, and social outcomes of vulnerable children and young people in NSW.

The project first collected information from a range of NSW government departments on young peoples’ interactions with health, social, child protection, and other state government services. The ABS has extended the depth of insights produced by the project through safely linking these state government data sets with de-identified Commonwealth data contained in the [Multi-Agency Data Integration Project](#) (MADIP) asset. MADIP contains information on health, education, government payments, income and taxation, employment, and population demographics.

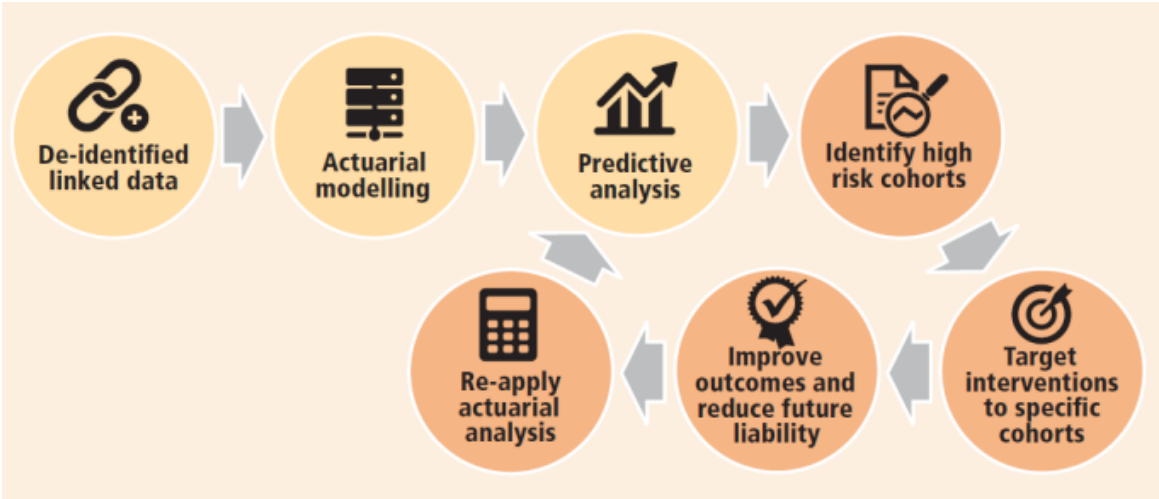
The data linked by the ABS is being used by DCJ to analyse and build predictive models of financial and social outcomes. This work will inform the direction and prioritisation of NSW government funding to deliver the programs that will be most effective in improving outcomes for the state’s vulnerable children and young people.

The benefits to the community of the *NSW Their Futures Matter* initiative are:

- supporting the identification of trends and gaps in government service usage and delivery for vulnerable children and their families, including education outcomes, rates of incarceration, mental illness, out-of-home-care, and employment
- better tailoring services to suit the needs of vulnerable children and their families
- delivering clear evidence on service, support, and program effectiveness
- providing valuable information for research and planning of government supports and services
- supporting the implementation of new policies and program development directed at improving outcomes for vulnerable children and their families.

The project has progressed significantly, and the analysis of linked Commonwealth data is expected by the end of 2021. The models and insights developed in this project will inform important NSW government policies for many years.

Their Futures Matter project model



Analysis of performance against purpose

As Australia's national statistics office, the ABS performs a key role in assisting governments, business and the community by delivering trusted, world-class statistics, and providing information necessary to drive innovation and to meet evolving information needs to support our economy, environment, and society.

In 2020–21, the ABS has demonstrated the achievement of its objectives. Of the seven performance measures outlined in the [2020–21 Corporate Plan](#), the ABS achieved four, substantially achieved one, and established a benchmark for measuring future years achievement for the remaining two.

Operating environment

The ABS has continued to emphasise the delivery of high-quality official statistics and generating new insights from the effective use of available data. The ABS has achieved its objectives in 2020–21 within a complex operating environment and data landscape. Several factors have influenced performance outcomes including (but not limited to):

- Changing expectations of clients, including the need for more timely statistics, reduced provider burden, and access to microdata for research and policy development.
- Availability of alternative data sources, including large private sector datasets.
- Increased expectations for collaboration within and across governments.
- Growing need for data skills and expertise across the Australian Government, in a competitive labour market.
- The need to secure data in an increasingly challenging cyber-security environment.
- Greatly expanding demand from within government for data and data analytics capability to inform policy development.

Key activities

In 2020–21, the ABS undertook a diverse range of activities to achieve its purpose, such as:

- Delivering a significant household survey program, including an extraordinary cycle of the Survey of Income and Housing, the first cycle of the Time Use Survey since 2006, and preparation of the first phase of the Intergenerational Health and Mental Health Study.
- Continuing provision of critical new surveys to inform Government response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including the *Weekly Payroll Jobs and Wages* collection, and the *Business Impact of COVID-19* and *Household Impacts of COVID-19* surveys (see [Case study 3 \(Measure 4.1\)](#) for more information).
- Reducing provider burden and improving survey response rates by undertaking a series of trials to investigate options for reducing regulatory burden.
- Launching the new ABS website, making it easier for users to find and use ABS data, as well as making statistics accessible direct to users' systems through the API service.
- Preparing for the 2021 Census, including conduct of the Operational Readiness Exercise in urban and regional centres across Australia.
- Preparing for the 2020–21 Agricultural Census, including further modernisation of how the ABS produces agricultural statistics.
- Undertaking and supporting a broad range of data integration activities as a primary integrating authority (see [Case study 2 \(Measure 3.2\)](#) and [Case study 4 \(Measure 4.1\)](#) for examples).
- Undertaking a series of research projects to provide greater insights into productivity in the non-market sector, including experimental estimates of productivity for schools, universities, and hospitals.

Specific factors affecting achievement of purpose

The ABS achieved most measures and targets, notwithstanding the challenges in the ABS' operating environment.

The factors which affected ABS performance were:

- **Increased demand**– the ABS experienced a sharp increase in the demand for data to assist governments and businesses in both their response to, and recovery from, the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **COVID-19 pandemic** –well into 2020–21, the ABS data collection activity and field operations were reduced or paused to protect both its staff and the Australian public. To maintain the quality of statistics, the ABS

placed to protect both its staff and the Australian public. To maintain the quality of statistics, the ABS implemented flexible and agile approaches to data collection, increasingly using alternative data sources. The COVID-19 pandemic increased costs of collecting data and placed significant pressure on field staff.

- **2021 Census readiness** – the ABS conducted the Operational Readiness Exercise for the 2021 Census in late 2020. During the test, selected areas in Victoria and South Australia were subject to a lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The ABS implemented a range of options for households to respond to avoid contact between field officers and the public.
- **Significant cooperation** - the ABS has continued to establish new partnerships and identify new alternative data sources. This includes banks and other commercial entities who have agreed to provide their data to the ABS. This has been a key contributor to reducing burden on survey respondents. The ABS is grateful for the support it has received from Australian businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic which has assisted the ABS in its provision of critical information to governments.



INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Assistant Treasurer, Minister for Housing and Minister for Homelessness, Social and Community Housing

Opinion

In my opinion, the financial statements of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (the Entity) for the year ended 30 June 2021:

- (a) comply with Australian Accounting Standards – Reduced Disclosure Requirements and the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability (Financial Reporting) Rule 2015*; and
- (b) present fairly the financial position of the Entity as at 30 June 2021 and its financial performance and cash flows for the year then ended.

The financial statements of the Entity, which I have audited, comprise the following as at 30 June 2021 and for the year then ended:

- Statement by the Accountable Authority and Chief Finance Officer;
- Statement of Comprehensive Income;
- Statement of Financial Position;
- Statement of Changes in Equity;
- Cash Flow Statement; and
- Notes to the financial statements, comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information.

Basis for opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with the Australian National Audit Office Auditing Standards, which incorporate the Australian Auditing Standards. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements* section of my report. I am independent of the Entity in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements for financial statement audits conducted by the Auditor-General and his delegates. These include the relevant independence requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards)* (the Code) to the extent that they are not in conflict with the *Auditor-General Act 1997*. I have also fulfilled my other responsibilities in accordance with the Code. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Accountable Authority's responsibility for the financial statements

As the Accountable Authority of the Entity, the Australian Statistician is responsible under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (the Act) for the preparation and fair presentation of annual financial statements that comply with Australian Accounting Standards – Reduced Disclosure Requirements and the rules made under the Act. The Australian Statistician is also responsible for such internal control as the Australian Statistician determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Australian Statistician is responsible for assessing the ability of the Entity to continue as a going concern, taking into account whether the Entity's operations will cease as a result of an administrative restructure or for any other reason. The Australian Statistician is also responsible for disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the assessment indicates that it is not appropriate.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

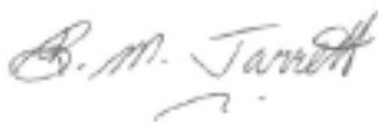
My objective is to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian National Audit Office Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian National Audit Office Auditing Standards, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control;
- obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Entity's internal control;
- evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Accountable Authority;
- conclude on the appropriateness of the Accountable Authority's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Entity's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Entity to cease to continue as a going concern; and
- evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with the Accountable Authority regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

Australian National Audit Office



Brandon Jarrett

Senior Executive Director

Delegate of the Auditor-General

Canberra

26 August 2021

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Statement by the Accountable Authority and Chief Financial Officer

In our opinion, the attached financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2021 comply with subsection 42(2) of the [Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013](#) (PGPA Act), and are based on properly maintained financial records as per subsection 41(2) of the PGPA Act.

In our opinion, at the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Australian Bureau of Statistics will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

Signed 
Dr David Gruen
Australian Statistician
24 August 2021

Signed 
Nick Stanton
Chief Financial Officer
24 August 2021

Statement of Comprehensive Income

For the period ended 30 June 2021

		2021	2020	Original Budget 2021
	Notes	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
NET COST OF SERVICES				
Expenses				
Employee benefits	1.1A	335,978	308,585	342,039
Suppliers	1.1B	106,609	87,885	106,588
Depreciation and amortisation	2.2A	50,186	47,055	53,066
Finance costs	1.1C	1,741	1,952	1,799
Impairment loss on financial instruments		-	2	-
Write-down and impairment of other assets	1.1D	18,800	23,332	-
Total expenses		513,314	468,811	503,492
Own-Source Income				
Own-source revenue				
Revenue from contracts with customers	1.2A	43,209	33,282	51,400
Rental income	1.2B	734	173	735
Other revenue	1.2C	1,652	3,162	-
Total own-source revenue		45,595	36,617	52,135
Gains				
Other gains		272	81	220
Total gains		272	81	220
Total own-source income		45,867	36,698	52,355
Net cost of services		(467,447)	(432,113)	(451,137)
Revenue from Government		414,382	378,506	413,370
Deficit		(53,065)	(53,607)	(37,767)

	(69,999)	(69,887)	(67,677)
OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME			
Items not subject to subsequent reclassification to net cost of services			
Changes in asset revaluation surplus	3,155	807	-
Total other comprehensive income/ (loss)	3,155	807	-
Total comprehensive loss	(49,910)	(52,800)	(37,767)

Accounting Policy

Revenue from Government

Amounts appropriated for departmental appropriations for the year (adjusted for any formal additions and reductions) are recognised as Revenue from Government when the Australian Bureau of Statistics (the ABS) gains control of the appropriation. Appropriations receivable are recognised at their nominal amounts. Departmental capital budgets are accounted for as contributions by owners.

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Refer to [Overview](#) for explanations of major variances between budgeted and actual amounts.

Statement of Financial Position

As at 30 June 2021

		2021	2020	Original Budget 2021
	Notes	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
ASSETS				
Financial assets				
Cash and cash equivalents		4,508	6,087	3,500
Trade and other receivables	2.1A	99,449	82,711	82,427
Total financial assets		103,957	88,798	85,927
Non-financial assets				
Leasehold improvements	2.2A	28,488	30,921	28,805
Buildings ¹	2.2A	134,444	148,340	133,059
Plant and equipment ¹	2.2A	18,023	17,133	19,126
Intangibles	2.2A	84,006	95,656	105,374
Prepayments		12,739	12,941	12,959
Total non-financial assets		277,700	304,991	299,323
Total assets		381,657	393,789	385,250
LIABILITIES				
Payables				
Suppliers	2.3A	13,791	23,121	24,020
Other payables	2.3B	56,451	42,115	43,137
Total payables		70,242	65,236	67,157
Interest bearing liabilities				

Leases	2.4	140,520	151,936	139,876
Total interest bearing liabilities		140,520	151,936	139,876
Provisions				
Employee leave		114,451	108,834	110,808
Other	2.5A	1,979	1,417	1,853
Total provisions		116,430	110,251	112,661
Total liabilities		327,192	327,423	319,694
Net assets		54,465	66,366	65,556
EQUITY				
Contributed equity		410,490	372,481	410,490
Reserves		33,493	30,338	30,338
Accumulated deficit		(389,518)	(336,453)	(375,272)
Total equity		54,465	66,366	65,556

1. Right-of-use assets under AASB16 *Leases* relating to office and motor vehicle leases are included in Buildings, and Plant and equipment respectively.

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Refer to [Overview](#) for explanations of major variances between budgeted and actual amounts.

Accounting Policy

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash is recognised at its nominal value and held at bank.

Employee leave

Refer to Accounting Policy Note 1.1A: Employee Benefits for detail.

Statement of Changes in Equity

For the period ended 30 June 2021

	Retained earnings			Asset revaluation reserves			Contributed equity		
	2021	2020	Original Budget 2021	2021	2020	Original Budget 2021	2021	2020	Original Budget 2021
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Opening balance									
Balance carried forward from previous period	(336,453)	(296,635)	(336,453)	30,338	29,531	30,338	372,481	349,392	372,481
Adjustment on initial application of AASB 16	-	13,789	(1,052)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Adjusted opening balance	(336,453)	(282,846)	(337,505)	30,338	29,531	30,338	372,481	349,392	372,481
Comprehensive income									
Surplus/(Deficit) for the period	(53,065)	(53,607)	(37,767)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other comprehensive income	-	-	-	3,155	807	-	-	-	-
Total comprehensive income	(53,065)	(53,607)	(37,767)	3,155	807	-	-	-	-
Transactions with owners									
Contributions by owners									
Equity injection - appropriations	-	-	-	-	-	-	25,268	6,218	25,268
Equity injection - other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,377	-
Departmental capital budget	-	-	-	-	-	-	12,741	14,494	12,741
Total transactions with owners	-	-	-	-	-	-	38,009	23,089	38,009
Closing	(389,518)	(336,453)	(375,272)	33,493	30,338	30,338	410,490	372,481	410,490

Closing	(389,518)	(389,433)	(373,272)	33,493	30,338	30,338	410,430	372,481	410,430
balance as at									
30 June									

Accounting Policy

Equity injections

Amounts appropriated which are designated as ‘equity injections’ for a year (less any formal reductions) and Departmental Capital Budgets (DCBs) are recognised directly in contributed equity in that year.

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Refer to [Overview](#) for explanation of major variances between budgeted and actual amounts.

Cash Flow Statement

For the period ended 30 June 2021

	2021	2020	Original Budget 2021
Notes	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
Cash received			
Appropriations	418,285	380,582	406,861
Sales of goods and rendering of services	52,899	35,303	55,565
Net GST received	13,704	10,204	11,451
Other	1,193	378	2,440
Total cash received	486,081	426,467	476,317
Cash used			
Employees	325,362	296,472	340,897
Suppliers	125,081	95,361	118,439
Interest payments on lease liabilities	1,736	1,950	1,799
Section 74 receipts transferred to OPA	16,800	13,400	-
Total cash used	468,979	407,183	461,135
Net cash from operating activities	17,102	19,284	15,182
INVESTING ACTIVITIES			
Cash received			
Proceeds from sales of property, plant and equipment	99	85	100
Total cash received	99	85	100
Cash used			
Purchase of leasehold improvements	1,653	241	2,135
Purchase of plant and equipment	6,709	6,215	10,373
Purchase of intangibles	28,021	22,721	30,529
Total cash used	36,383	29,177	43,037
Net cash (used by) investing activities	(36,284)	(29,092)	(42,937)

FINANCING ACTIVITIES			
Cash received			
Contributed equity	25,402	9,148	27,645
Departmental capital budget	9,392	14,230	12,822
Total cash received	34,794	23,378	40,467
Cash used			
Principal payments of lease liabilities	17,191	12,683	15,299
Total cash used	17,191	12,683	15,299
Net cash from financing activities	17,603	10,695	25,168
Net increase / (decrease) in cash held	(1,579)	887	(2,587)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period	6,087	5,200	6,087
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period	4,508	6,087	3,500

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Refer to [Overview](#) for explanation of major variances between budgeted and actual amounts.

Overview

Objectives of the ABS

The ABS is an Australian Government controlled entity. It is a not-for-profit entity. The objective of the ABS is to inform Australia's important decisions by delivering relevant, trusted, and objective data, statistics and insights. The ABS maintains its emphasis on the delivery of high-quality official statistics and drawing new information insights from effective and safe use of available data.

The Basis of Preparation

The financial statements are general purpose financial statements and are required by section 42 of the [Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013](#).

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with:

- [Public Governance, Performance and Accountability \(Financial Reporting\) Rule 2015](#) (FRR);
- Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations – Reduced Disclosure Requirements issued by the [Australian Accounting Standards Board](#) (AASB) that apply for the reporting period; and
- AASB 1053 *Application of Tiers of Australian Accounting Standards* and other reporting requirements. The ABS has applied Tier 2 reporting requirements.

The financial statements have been prepared on an accrual basis and are in accordance with the historical cost convention, except for certain assets and liabilities at fair value. Except where stated, no allowance is made for the effect of changing prices on the results or the financial position. The financial statements are presented in Australian dollars.

Significant Accounting Judgments and Estimates

In the process of applying the accounting policies listed in the notes, the ABS has made judgements in relation to the impairment provision of Internally Generated Software (IGSW) assets. The ABS engaged an independent reviewer to assess the IGSW for impairment as per the requirements of AASB 136 *Impairment of Assets*. Where indicators of impairment exist, an amount of impairment is determined based around the uncertainty of its future usability.

The liability for long service leave and annual leave is determined by reference to the work of the Australian Government Actuary (AGA). The estimate of the present value of the liability takes into account attrition rates and pay increases through promotion and inflation.

New Accounting Standards

All new accounting standards that were issued prior to the sign-off date and are applicable to the current reporting period did not have a material effect on the entity's financial statements. No accounting standard has been adopted earlier than the application date as stated in the standard.

Taxation

The ABS is exempt from all forms of taxation except Fringe Benefits Tax and the Goods and Services Tax (GST).

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of GST except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office; and for receivables and payables.

Reporting of Administered Activities

There were no administered expenses, assets, liabilities, contingencies or commitments as at 30 June 2021 (2020: Nil).

Except where otherwise stated, administered items are accounted for on the same basis and using the same policies as for departmental items, including the application of Australian Accounting Standards.

Impacts of COVID-19

The outbreak of COVID-19 impacted on the collection of data where face to face engagement was required. This reduced the travel and contractor expenses and the amount of user funded revenue which were able to be recognised in 2020-21.

The ABS was also engaged in direct work relating to measuring the impact of, and recovery from COVID-19.

the ABS has also engaged in direct work relating to measuring the impact of, and recovery from, COVID-19.

During the year the ABS carried out a fair value review of its property, plant and equipment asset classes, an actuarial assessment of employee provisions, and an impairment review of its internally generated software. There were no indicators that COVID-19 had an impact on the reported values of these items which would significantly affect the ABS' financial position and its ability to continue as a going concern.

Events after the Reporting Period

Departmental

There have been no events occurring subsequent to the balance sheet date that would affect the ABS' financial statements for the financial year ended 30 June 2021.

Administered

There have been no events occurring subsequent to the balance sheet date that would affect the ABS' financial statements for the financial year ended 30 June 2021.

Explanations of Major Variances to Budget

The following table provides commentary of major variances between the unaudited ABS budgeted information published in the Treasury's 2020-21 Portfolio Budget Statements (PBS) and the audited 2020-21 financial statements.

An explanation for a major variance may not be provided where the item is considered immaterial in the overall context of the financial statements.

As a guide, variances are considered to be 'major' based on the following criteria:

- the variance between budget and actual is greater than 10%; and
- the variance between budget and actual is greater than 2% of the relevant category (Income, Expenses and Equity totals); or
- items which may be considered to be important for the reader's understanding or are relevant to an assessment of the discharge of accountability and to an analysis of performance of the ABS.

Affected line items	2021 Actual	Original Budget	Variance	Explanations of major variances
	\$000	\$000	\$000	
Statement of Comprehensive Income				
Employee benefits	335,978	342,039	(6,061)	Employee benefits expenditure is \$6.1m lower than the original budget as a result of COVID-19 impacts on field staff involved in data collection and a decrease in leave provisions due to movements in the bond rate.
Write-down and impairment of other assets	18,800	-	18,800	Write-down and impairment of other assets primarily represents the impairment of internally generated software assets for the Statistical Business Transformation Program.
Revenue from contracts with customers	43,209	51,400	(8,191)	Revenue from contracts with customers is \$8.2m lower than the original budget as a result of deferrals to face-to-face data collection caused by COVID-19.

Other Revenue	1,652	-	1,652	This includes resources received free of charge and refunds. Other revenue is inherently uncertain in nature and is not budgeted for.
Changes in asset revaluation surplus	3,155	-	3,155	The variance is primarily due to an extension of the useful lives of ICT hardware as a result of an independent asset revaluation. Changes in asset revaluation surplus is inherently uncertain in nature and is not budgeted for.
Statement of Financial Position				
Trade and other receivables	99,449	82,427	17,022	Trade and other receivables are \$17.0m higher than the original budget. This is primarily a result of increased unearned revenue due to deferrals in surveys due to COVID-19, and an underspend in capital.
Intangibles	84,006	105,374	(21,368)	The variance is primarily due to the write-down and impairment of internally generated software assets for the Statistical Business Transformation Program.
Suppliers payable	13,791	24,020	(10,229)	Suppliers payable is \$10.3m lower than budget due to the completion of IT infrastructure projects prior to year-end, and global supply chain delays for IT hardware.
Other payables	56,451	43,137	13,314	Other payables are \$13.3m higher than the original budget primarily due to unearned revenue. Unearned revenue balances are influenced by the timing of payments and survey deferrals caused by COVID-19.
Statement of Changes in Equity and Cash Flow Statement				
The variances in the Statement of Changes in Equity and Cash Flow Statement primarily reflect the flow on effect from the variances above.				

1. Financial Performance

This section analyses the financial performance of the Australian Bureau of Statistics for the year ended 30 June 2021.

1.1. Expenses

	2021	2020
	\$'000	\$'000
Note 1.1A: Employee Benefits		
Wages and salaries		
ABS staff	235,621	218,264
Interviewers	12,485	13,257
Census field staff	11,305	273
Total wages and salaries	259,411	231,794
Superannuation		
Defined contribution plans		
ABS staff	26,646	24,852
Interviewers	1,761	1,909
Census field staff	938	53
Total defined contribution plans	29,345	26,814
Defined benefit plans		
ABS staff	18,734	19,041
Interviewers	403	469
Census field staff	110	-
Total defined benefit plans	19,247	19,510
Leave and other entitlements	26,876	28,118
Separation and redundancies	700	1,291
Other employee expenses	399	1,058
Total employee benefits	335,978	308,585

Accounting Policy

Liabilities for 'short-term employee benefits' (as defined in AASB 119 *Employee Benefits*) and termination benefits due within twelve months of the end of the reporting period are measured at their nominal amounts.

The nominal amount is calculated with regard to the rates expected to be paid on settlement of the liability.

Other long-term employee benefits are measured as net total of the present value of the defined benefit obligation at the end of the reporting period minus the fair value at the end of the reporting period of plan assets (if any) out of which the obligations are to be settled directly.

Leave

The liability for employee benefits includes provision for annual leave and long service leave. No provision has been made for sick leave as all sick leave is non-vesting and the average sick leave taken in future years by employees of the ABS is estimated to be less than the annual entitlement for sick leave.

The leave liabilities are calculated on the basis of employees' remuneration at the estimated salary rates that will apply at the time the leave is taken, plus the ABS' employer superannuation contribution rates and applicable on-costs, to the extent that the leave is likely to be taken during service rather than paid out on termination.

An independent actuarial valuation of employee benefit liabilities is conducted every three years. The liability for long service leave and annual leave has been determined by reference to the work of the Australian Government Actuary (AGA) for 30 June 2021. The estimate of the present value of the liability takes into account attrition rates and pay increases through promotion and inflation.

Separation and redundancy

Provision is made for separation and redundancy benefit payments. The ABS recognises a provision for termination when it has developed a detailed formal plan for the terminations and has informed those employees affected that it will carry out the terminations.

Superannuation

The ABS' staff are members of the Commonwealth Superannuation Scheme (CSS), the Public Sector Superannuation Scheme (PSS), the PSS accumulation plan (PSSap) or other superannuation funds held outside the Australian Government.

The CSS and PSS are defined benefit schemes for the Australian Government. The PSSap is a defined contribution scheme.

The liability for defined benefits is recognised in the financial statements of the Australian Government and is settled by the Australian Government in due course. This liability is reported in the Department of Finance's administered schedules and notes.

The ABS makes employer contributions to the employees' superannuation scheme at rates determined by an actuary to be sufficient to meet the current cost to the Government, and accounts for the contributions as if they were contributions to defined contribution plans.

The liability for superannuation recognised as at 30 June represents outstanding contributions for the final fortnight of the year.

	2021	2020
	\$'000	\$'000
Note 1.1B: Suppliers		
Goods and services		
Consultants	5,985	5,919
Contractors	32,744	30,343
IT services and communications	32,426	22,617
Printing and subscriptions	12,275	2,154
Building expenses (excluding lease payments)	7,684	7,196
Recruitment and employment related	1,620	731
Stationery and postage	2,521	1,695
Travel ¹	4,243	9,530
Training	1,281	2,388
Advertising	600	283
Other ¹	3,815	3,366
Total goods and services supplied or rendered	105,194	86,222

Goods and services are made of:

Goods supplied	15,731	5,672
Services rendered	89,463	80,550
Total goods and services supplied or rendered	105,194	86,222
Other suppliers		
Operating lease rentals ²	391	233
Workers compensation expenses	1,024	1,430
Total other suppliers	1,415	1,663
Total suppliers	106,609	87,885

1. The mapping of suppliers expenses by category has been reviewed and updated including comparatives. In 2019-20, \$0.102 million of travel expenses and \$0.016 million of miscellaneous expenses relating to Census operations were included in the Census operations costs. In 2020-21, these expenses were mapped to Travel and Other respectively.

In 2019-20, \$0.002 million of enumeration costs relating to the population survey were included in the Population survey operations interviewer. In 2020-21, these expenses were mapped to Other. There was no impact on the operating result.

2. The above lease disclosures should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes 1.1C, 1.2B, 2.2A and 2.4.

The ABS had short-term lease commitments totalling \$0.716 million as at 30 June 2021.

Accounting Policy

Short-term leases and leases of low-value assets

The ABS has elected not to recognise right-of-use assets and lease liabilities for short-term leases of assets that have a lease term of 12 months or less and leases of low-value assets (less than \$10,000). The ABS recognises the lease payments associated with these leases as an expense on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

	2021	2020
	\$'000	\$'000
Note 1.1C: Finance costs		
Interest on lease liabilities ¹	1,736	1,950
Unwinding of discount	5	2
Total finance costs	1,741	1,952

1. Interest on lease liabilities relates to the discharge of lease liabilities.

The above lease disclosures should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes 1.1B, 1.2B, 2.2A and 2.4

Note 1.1D: Write-down and impairment of other assets

Impairment of intangibles ¹	1,534	21,374
Write-down of property, plant and equipment ²	109	566
Write-down of intangibles ³	17,157	1,392
Total write-down and impairment of other assets	18,800	23,332

1. This amount relates to the impairment provision of Internally Generated Software (IGSW) assets reflecting the uncertainty around its future usability.

2. This amount represents the write-off of a number of Property, Plant and Equipment assets due to obsolescence.
3. This amount largely represents the write-off of a number of IGSW assets due to technological obsolescence.

1.2 Own-Source Revenue and Gains

	2021	2020
	\$'000	\$'000
Note 1.2A: Revenue from contracts with customers		
Rendering of services	43,209	33,282
Total revenue from contracts with customers	43,209	33,282
Disaggregation of revenue from contracts with customers		
Major product / service line:		
User funded surveys	29,285	20,161
Data subscriptions	1,870	1,392
Statistical consultancies	12,054	11,729
	43,209	33,282
Type of customer:		
Australian Government entities (related parties)	38,559	27,858
State and Territory Governments	1,755	2,714
Non-government entities	2,895	2,710
	43,209	33,282
Timing of transfer of goods and services:		
Over time	43,209	33,282
	43,209	33,282

Accounting Policy

Revenue from the rendering of services is recognised in accordance with AASB 15 and AASB 1058.

The major streams of rendering of services revenue are associated with user funded surveys, consultancies and the provision of subscription services. The ABS applies the five-step revenue recognition model in determining the recognition of revenue. This is described below:

Step 1: Identify the contract with the customer

Step 2: Identify the performance obligations

Step 3: Determine the transaction price

Step 4: Allocate the transaction price to the performance obligations in the contract

Step 5: Recognise revenue when or as the ABS satisfies a performance obligation

The transaction price is the total amount of consideration to which the ABS expects to be entitled in exchange for transferring promised goods or services to a customer. The consideration promised in a contract with a customer may include fixed amounts, variable amounts, or both.

The ABS recognises revenue over time for user funded surveys where the ABS does not have an alternative use and it has an enforceable right to payment for work performed. The ABS uses an input method based on the costs expected to measure the revenue.

The ABS recognises revenue at a point in time for user funded surveys when the performance obligations, as per

the contract are met.

Consultancies and the provision of subscription services revenue are recognised over time as the customer simultaneously receives and consumes the benefits as they are provided.

Where a revenue stream does not meet the scope of AASB 15, the ABS has considered its treatment under AASB 1058. An example of revenue recognised under AASB 1058 is the resources received free of charge received by the ABS from the Australian National Audit Office providing Audit Services. The services are recognised as revenue at a point in time when services are delivered.

Receivables for goods and services, which have 30-day terms, are recognised at the nominal amounts due less any impairment allowance account. Collectability of debts is reviewed at end of the reporting period. Allowances are made when collectability of the debt is no longer probable.

	2021	2020
	\$'000	\$'000
Note 1.2B: Rental Income		
Operating lease		
Lease income	734	173
Total rental income	734	173

Operating Leases

The ABS subleases part of the Adelaide and Perth offices to other Commonwealth entities. In this arrangement, the ABS continues to bear all the risks and rewards of the underlying lease, and recognise rental income.

Maturity analysis of operating lease
income receivables:

	2021	2020
	\$'000	\$'000
Within 1 year	762	735
One to two years	793	762
Two to three years	826	793
Three to four years	258	826
Four to five years	213	258
More than 5 years	448	661
Total undiscounted lease payments receivable	3,300	4,035

The above lease disclosures should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes 2.2A and 2.4.

	2021	2020
	\$'000	\$'000
Note 1.2C: Other revenue		
Resources received free of charge ¹	1,193	2,957
Other ²	459	205
Total other revenue	1,652	3,162

1. This amount relates to the services received free of charge (\$0.126 million) for the financial statements audit, staff secondment from the Australian Taxation Office (\$0.069 million) and the recognition of non-cash services (\$0.998 million) contributed as part of a project.

2. Other revenue consists primarily of rebates and refunds during the financial year.

Accounting Policy

Resources received free of charge

Resources received free of charge are recognised as revenue when, and only when, a fair value can be reliably determined and the services would have been purchased if they had not been donated. Use of those resources is recognised as an expense. Resources received free of charge are recorded as either revenue or gains depending on their nature.

Other revenue

Other revenue includes all miscellaneous revenue such as various refunds including Comcare premium adjustments.

Sale of assets

Gains from disposal of non-current assets are recognised when control of the asset has passed to the buyer.

Note 1.2D: Unsatisfied

Obligations

The ABS expects to recognise as income any liability for unsatisfied obligations associated with revenue from contracts with customers within the following periods:

	2021	2020
	\$'000	\$'000
Within one year	43,264	34,597
One to two years	2,108	1,354
Total	45,372	35,951

Refer to the Accounting Policy Note 2.3B: Other Payables – Unearned revenue for detail.

2. Financial Position

This section analyses the Australian Bureau of Statistics’ assets used to generate its financial performance and operating liabilities incurred as a result.

Leasehold improvements and plant and equipment are carried at fair value in accordance with AASB 13 *Fair Value Measurement*. The remaining assets and liabilities disclosed in the statement of financial position do not apply the fair value hierarchy.

Employee related information is disclosed in [4. People and Relationships](#) section.

2.1. Financial Assets

	2021	2020
	\$'000	\$'000
Note 2.1A: Trade and Other Receivables		
Appropriations receivable	93,051	74,562
Receivable from government ¹	-	2,377
Goods and services	3,515	2,503
GST receivable from the Australian Taxation Office	2,267	2,851
Other receivables	622	424
Total trade and other receivables (gross)	99,455	82,717
Less impairment loss allowance	(6)	(6)
Total trade and other receivables (net)	99,449	82,711

Credit terms for goods and services were within 30 days (2020: 30 days).

All trade and other receivables are expected to be recovered in no more than 12 months.

1. As a result of a Government decision, the ABS accrued \$2.377 million for Equity Injections in 2019-20, which was appropriated in the 2020-21 Appropriation Act (No. 2).

Reconciliation of the Impairment

Allowance Account:

Movements in relation to 2021		
	Goods and services	Total
	\$'000	\$'000
Opening balance	(6)	(6)
Amounts written off	-	-
Increase/decrease recognised in net cost of services	-	-
Closing balance	(6)	(6)

Accounting Policy

Trade receivables

Trade receivables, loans and other receivables that are held for the purpose of collecting the contractual cash flows

where the cash flows are solely payments of principal and interest, that are not provided at below-market interest rates, are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method adjusted for any loss allowance.

Appropriations receivable

Refer to Revenue from Government for accounting policy.

Impairment of financial assets

Trade and other receivables assets at amortised cost are assessed for impairment at the end of each reporting period. The simplified approach has been adopted in measuring the impairment loss allowance at an amount equal to lifetime expected credit loss.

2.2. Non-Financial Assets

Note 2.2A: Reconciliation of the Opening and Closing Balances of Property, Plant & Equipment and Intangibles

	Leasehold improvements	Buildings ¹	Plant and equipment ¹	Computer software ²	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
As at 1 July 2020					
Gross book value	35,044	165,890	31,654	236,141	468,729
Work in progress	240	-	1,205	40,286	41,731
Accumulated depreciation, amortisation and impairment	(4,363)	(17,550)	(15,726)	(180,771)	(218,410)
Total as at 1 July 2020	30,921	148,340	17,133	95,656	292,050
Adjustment ³	58	(248)	(308)	250	(248)
Adjusted total as at 1 July 2020	30,979	148,092	16,825	95,906	291,802
Additions					
Purchased	2,013	-	6,518	1,385	9,916
Internally developed	-	-	-	22,650	22,650
Right-of-use assets	-	6,151	77	-	6,228
Revaluations and impairments recognised in other comprehensive income ⁴	711	-	2,640	-	3,351

Write-down and impairments recognised in net cost of services	-	-	-	(18,082)	(18,082)
Depreciation and amortisation	(5,215)	-	(7,869)	(17,244)	(30,328)
Depreciation on right-of-use assets	-	(19,799)	(59)	-	(19,858)
Disposals	-	-	(109)	(609)	(718)
Total as at 30 June 2021	28,488	134,444	18,023	84,006	264,961
Total as at 30 June 2021 represented by					
Gross book value	28,488	171,793	15,862	252,002	468,145
Work in progress ⁵	-	-	3,027	24,955	27,982
Accumulated depreciation, amortisation and impairment	-	(37,349)	(866)	(192,951)	(231,166)
Total as at 30 June 2021 represented by	28,488	134,444	18,023	84,006	264,961
Carrying amount of right-of-use assets	-	134,444	110	-	134,554

1. Right-of-use assets under AASB16 *Leases* relating to office leases and motor vehicle leases are included in Buildings, and Plant and equipment respectively.
2. The carrying amount of computer software includes \$79.178 million of internally generated software and \$4.828 million of purchased software. The ABS engaged an independent reviewer to assess impairment of computer software.
3. The opening balance of the right-of-use asset (\$0.248 million) was adjusted due to a market review of lease payments and \$0.058 million of assets was reclassified.
4. An independent valuer reviewed the carrying value of assets and the increase were \$0.711 million in leasehold improvements (2020: increase of \$0.754 million); and \$2.640 million in plant and equipment (2020: \$0.518 million). The make good provision was revalued and increased by \$0.196 million which is disclosed Note 2.5A Other Provisions. Additionally, a new make good provision of \$0.361 million was recognised for one lease, and reflected as additions

additions.

5. Assets under work in progress are capitalised when available for use. For further detail, refer to the [Capital Work in Progress](#) section in the Accounting Policy.

Contractual commitments for the acquisition of property, plant, equipment and intangible assets

Capital commitments relate to contracts for the acquisition of property, plant, equipment and intangible assets. Commitments are GST exclusive where relevant.

	2021	2020
	\$'000	\$'000
Capital commitments		
Leasehold improvements	21	-
Plant and equipment	1,300	3,639
Intangibles	1,633	2,940
Total commitments	2,954	6,579

Accounting Policy

Acquisition of Assets

Assets are recorded at cost on acquisition except as stated below. The cost of acquisition includes the fair value of assets transferred in exchange and liabilities undertaken. Financial assets are initially measured at their fair value plus transaction costs where appropriate.

Assets acquired at no cost, or for nominal consideration, are initially recognised as assets and income at their fair value at the date of acquisition, unless acquired as a consequence of restructuring of administrative arrangements. In the latter case, assets are initially recognised as contributions by owners at the amounts at which they were recognised in the transferor’s accounts immediately prior to the restructuring.

Asset Recognition Threshold

Purchases of plant and equipment are recognised initially at cost in the statement of financial position. The table below summarises the asset recognition thresholds:

Asset Class	Unit Threshold ¹	Class Threshold
IT hardware ¹	\$1,000	\$10,000
Plant and equipment	\$1,000	\$10,000
Leasehold improvements	\$1,000	\$30,000

1. Laptops are excluded from the unit threshold.

The initial cost of an asset includes an estimate of the cost of dismantling and removing the item and restoring the site on which it is located. This is particularly relevant to ‘make good’ provisions in property leases taken up by the ABS where there exists an obligation to restore the property to its original condition. These costs are included in the value of the ABS’ leasehold improvements with a corresponding provision for the ‘make good’ recognised.

Lease Right-of-Use (ROU) Assets

Leased ROU assets are capitalised at the commencement date of the lease and comprise of the initial lease liability amount, initial direct costs incurred when entering into the lease less any lease incentives received. These assets are accounted for by Commonwealth lessees as separate asset classes to corresponding assets owned outright, but included in the same column as where the corresponding underlying assets would be presented if they were owned.

On initial adoption of AASB 16 the ABS has adjusted the ROU assets at the date of initial application by the amount of any provision for onerous leases recognised immediately before the date of initial application. Following initial

application, an impairment review is undertaken for any right of use lease asset that shows indicators of impairment and an impairment loss is recognised against any right of use lease asset that is impaired. Lease ROU assets continue to be measured at cost after initial recognition in the ABS’ financial statements.

Revaluations

Following initial recognition at cost, property, plant and equipment (excluding ROU assets) are carried at fair value (or an amount not materially different from fair value) less subsequent accumulated depreciation and accumulated impairment losses. Valuations are conducted with sufficient frequency to ensure that the carrying amounts of assets did not differ materially from the assets’ fair values as at the reporting date. The regularity of independent valuations depends upon the volatility of movements in market values for the relevant assets.

Revaluation adjustments are made on a class basis. Any revaluation increment is credited to equity under the heading of asset revaluation reserve except to the extent that it reversed a previous revaluation decrement of the same asset class that was previously recognised in the surplus/deficit. Revaluation decrements for a class of assets are recognised directly in the surplus/deficit except to the extent that they reversed a previous revaluation increment for that class. Any accumulated depreciation as at the revaluation date is eliminated against the gross carrying amount of the asset and the asset restated to the revalued amount.

Depreciation

Depreciable property, plant and equipment assets are written-off to their estimated residual values over their estimated useful lives to the ABS using, in all cases, the straight-line method of depreciation.

Depreciation rates (useful lives), residual values and methods are reviewed at each reporting date and necessary adjustments are recognised in the current, or current and future reporting periods, as appropriate.

Depreciation rates applying to each class of depreciable asset are based on the following useful lives:

	2021	2020
Leasehold improvements	Lease term	Lease term
Property, plant and equipment	4-10 years*	4-10 years*

* Within this class, Artwork and Curios have a useful life between 10-100 years.

The depreciation rates for ROU assets are based on the commencement date to the earlier of the end of the useful life of the ROU asset or the end of the lease term.

Impairment

All assets were assessed for indications of impairment at 30 June 2021. Where indications of impairment exist, the asset’s recoverable amount is estimated and an impairment loss recognised if the asset’s recoverable amount is less than its carrying amount. The impairment result is reflected in the Statement of Comprehensive Income in accordance with AASB 136 *Impairment of Assets*.

The recoverable amount of an asset is the higher of its fair value less costs of disposal and its value in use. Value in use is the present value of the future cash flows expected to be derived from the asset. Where the future economic benefit of an asset is not primarily dependent on the asset’s ability to generate future cash flows, and the asset would be replaced if the ABS were deprived of the asset, its value in use is taken to be its depreciated replacement cost.

Derecognition

An item of property, plant and equipment is derecognised upon disposal or when no further future economic benefits are expected from its use or disposal.

Intangibles

The ABS’ intangibles comprise purchased and internally developed software for internal use. These assets are carried at cost less accumulated amortisation and accumulated impairment losses.

Software assets were assessed for indications of impairment as at 30 June 2021. Refer to Note 1.1D: Write-Down and Impairment of Other Assets for further detail.

Internally Generated Software

The ABS builds and maintains a significant set of internally generated software assets (IGSW) assets.

All software developed in-house are capitalised in accordance with the asset recognition threshold. The costing methodology capitalises direct salary and on costs for programmers. General administration and overhead costs relating to software development are not capitalised. The data capture systems in place to collect effort recording data for programmers are in line with the requirements of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability (Financial Reporting) Rule 2015*.

Asset Recognition Threshold

Purchases of intangible assets are recognised initially at cost in the statement of financial position, except for purchases costing less than the following thresholds, which are expensed in the year of acquisition. The recognition thresholds for intangible assets are summarised below:

Asset Class	Unit Threshold	Class Threshold
Purchased software	\$1,000	\$50,000
Internally generated software	NA	\$300,000

Amortisation

Software is amortised on a straight-line basis over its anticipated useful life.

The ABS has long term commitments to survey and data collection programs. These are supported by software packages that are required to be maintained for the same time period as the data collection and analysis programs, to ensure consistency in approach and of data treatment.

The useful lives of the ABS’ software are:

	2021	2020
Computer software (purchased)	5-15 years*	5-15 years*
Computer software (internally generated)	5-15 years*	5-15 years*

*The above table outlines the range of life in years for computer software, however, the average life is currently 10 years (2020: 10 years).

Capital Work in Progress

Capital work in progress represents two main asset types: software assets under development, and office refurbishments. Work in progress is disclosed in the intangibles, and property, plant and equipment balances respectively.

Software assets are capitalised when available for use. Where use of the asset commences after substantial completion of the development phase, but some improvements or enhancements to the system continue to be made, the date of substantial completion is treated as the date of completion and amortisation commences from that date.

2.3. Payables

	2021	2020
	\$'000	\$'000
Note 2.3A: Suppliers		
Trade creditors and accruals	13,791	23,121
Total suppliers payables	13,791	23,121

Settlement is usually made within 20 days (2020: 20 days).

Accounting Policy

Suppliers and Other Payables

Suppliers and other payables are recognised at amortised cost. Liabilities are recognised to the extent that the goods or services have been received (and irrespective of having been invoiced). Supplier and payables are derecognised upon payment.

Note 2.3B: Other Payables

Salaries and wages	9,144	4,684
Superannuation	1,320	643
Unearned revenue	45,372	35,951
Other	615	837
Total other payables	56,451	42,115

Accounting Policy

Salaries and wages, Superannuation, Separations and redundancies

Refer to Note 1.1A: Employee Benefits for detail.

Unearned revenue

Unearned revenue includes revenue from provision of statistical consultancies and revenue from other entities for statistical surveys. The unearned revenue is recognised over time as services are provided. Refer to Note 1.2D:

Unsatisfied Obligations for detail.

2.4. Leases

	2021	2020
	\$'000	\$'000
Note 2.4: Leases		
Lease liabilities	140,520	151,936
Total leases	140,520	151,936

Total cash outflow for leases for the year ended 30 June 2021 was \$18.927 million (2020: \$14.633 million).

**Maturity analysis - contractual
undiscounted cash flows**

Within 1 year	19,562	16,803
Between 1 to 5 years	66,818	72,950
More than 5 years	66,013	75,576
Total leases	152,393	165,329

The ABS in its capacity as lessee has office space and fleet motor vehicle leases.

The above lease disclosures should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes 1.1C, 1.2B and 2.2A.

Accounting Policy

For all new contracts entered into, the ABS considers whether the contract is, or contains a lease. A lease is defined as ‘a contract, or part of a contract, that conveys the right to use an asset (the underlying asset) for a period of time in exchange for consideration’.

Once it has been determined that a contract is, or contains a lease, the lease liability is initially measured at the present value of the lease payments unpaid at the commencement date, discounted using the interest rate implicit in the lease, if that rate is readily determinable, or the ABS’ incremental borrowing rate.

Subsequent to initial measurement, the liability will be reduced for payments made and increased for interest. It is remeasured to reflect any reassessment or modification to the lease. When the lease liability is remeasured, the corresponding adjustment is reflected in the right-of-use asset or profit and loss depending on the nature of the reassessment or modification.

2.5. Provisions

Note 2.5A: Reconciliation Other Provisions

	Make good provision
	\$'000
As at 1 July 2020	1,417
Additional provisions made	361
Unwinding of discount or change in discount rate	5
Revaluation	196
Total as at 30 June 2021	1,979

The ABS currently has six agreements (2020: five) for the leasing of premises which have provisions requiring the ABS to restore the premises to their original condition at the conclusion of the lease. The ABS has made a provision to reflect the present value of these obligations.

Significant Accounting Judgements and Estimates

Make good provision

The ABS currently holds 11 leases for office space around Australia. Six lease agreements include make good clauses.

Provision for make good liability is made where it is probable that an outflow of resources will be required to settle the obligation and the amount can be reliably determined. The provision represents the estimated costs of making good leasehold premises in accordance with AASB 137 *Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets*.

3. Funding

This section identifies the Australian Bureau of Statistics’ funding structure.

3.1. Appropriations

Note 3.1A: Annual Appropriations ('Recoverable GST exclusive')

Annual Appropriations for 2021					
	Annual Appropriation	Receipts retained under PGPA Act - Section 74	Total appropriation	Appropriation applied (current and prior years)	Variance ²
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Departmental					
Ordinary annual services	414,382	56,868	471,250	459,933	11,317
Capital Budget ¹	12,741	-	12,741	9,392	3,349
Other services					
Equity Injections	27,645	-	27,645	25,402	2,243
Total departmental	454,768	56,868	511,636	494,727	16,909

1. Departmental capital budgets (DCBs) are appropriated through Appropriation Acts (No. 1, 3 and 5). They form part of the ordinary annual services, and are not separately identified in the Appropriation Acts.
2. The variance represents undrawn current year appropriations.

Annual appropriations for 2020

	Annual Appropriation	Receipts retained under PGPA Act - Section 74	Total appropriation	Appropriation applied (current and prior years)	Variance ²
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Departmental					
Ordinary annual services	378,506	38,661	417,167	404,956	12,211
Capital Budget ¹	14,494	-	14,494	14,230	264

Budget					
Other services					
Equity Injections	6,218	-	6,218	9,148	(2,930)
Total departmental	399,218	38,661	437,879	428,334	9,545

1. Departmental Capital Budgets (DCB) are appropriated through Appropriation Acts (No. 1, 3 and 5). They form part of the ordinary annual services, and are not separately identified in the Appropriation Acts.
2. The variance represents undrawn current year appropriations, and the negative variance represents prior year appropriations applied in the current year.

Note 3.1B: Unspent Annual Appropriations ('Recoverable GST exclusive')

	2021	2020
	\$'000	\$'000
Departmental		
<i>Appropriation Act (No. 1) 2019-20</i>	-	70,085
<i>Appropriation Act (No. 1) 2019-20 - Capital Budget (DCB) - Non Operating</i>	-	4,477
<i>Supply Act (No. 1) 2020-21</i>	3,851	-
<i>Supply Act (No. 1) 2020-21 - Capital Budget (DCB) - Non Operating</i>	7,433	-
<i>Appropriation Act (No. 1) 2020-21</i>	79,131	-
<i>Appropriation Act (No. 1) 2020-21 - Capital Budget (DCB) - Non Operating</i>	393	-
<i>Appropriation Act (No. 2) 2020-21 - Non Operating - Equity Injection</i>	2,243	-
<i>Cash at bank</i>	4,508	6,087
Total departmental	97,559	80,649

3.2. Net Cash Appropriation Arrangements

Note 3.2A: Net Cash Appropriation Arrangements

	2021	2020
	\$'000	\$'000
Total comprehensive loss - as per the Statement of Comprehensive Income	(49,910)	(52,800)
<i>Plus: depreciation/amortisation of assets funded through appropriations (departmental capital budget funding and/or equity injections)¹</i>	30,328	29,490
<i>Plus: depreciation of right-of-use assets²</i>	19,858	17,565
<i>Less: lease principal repayments²</i>	(17,191)	(12,683)
Net Cash Operating Surplus/ (Deficit)	(16,915)	(18,428)

1. From 2010-11, the Government introduced net cash appropriation arrangements where revenue appropriations for depreciation/amortisation expenses of non-corporate Commonwealth entities and selected corporate Commonwealth entities were replaced with a separate capital budget provided through equity injections. Capital budgets are to be appropriated in the period when cash payment for capital expenditure is required.
2. The inclusion of depreciation/amortisation expenses related to ROU leased assets and the lease liability principal repayment amount reflects the cash impact on implementation of AASB 16 *Leases*, it does not directly reflect a change in appropriation arrangements.

4. People and Relationships

This section describes a range of employment and post-employment benefits provided to our people and our relationships with other key people.

4.1. Key Management Personnel Remuneration

Key management personnel (KMP) are those persons having authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of the ABS, directly or indirectly, including its director (whether executive or otherwise).

In 2020-21, the total number of KMPs was six (2020: five), consisting of the Australian Statistician, four Deputy Australian Statisticians and one Acting Deputy Australian Statistician. The acting was for a continuous period of 12 weeks or more, and the officer had undertaken significant decision making that would qualify inclusion as a KMP requiring disclosure.

	2021	2020
	\$'000	\$'000
Short-term employee benefits		
Base salary	1,744	1,784
Other benefits and allowances ¹	22	8
Total short-term employee benefits	1,766	1,792
Post-employment benefits - Superannuation	296	295
Other long-term employee benefits - Long service leave ²	(12)	109
Total key management personnel remuneration expenses ³	2,050	2,196

1. Other benefits and allowances include car parking and related fringe benefits tax, and other allowances.
2. The negative amount is primarily as a result of a decrease in long service leave provisions due to movements in the bond rate.
3. The Portfolio Minister and Cabinet Ministers are KMPs of the ABS, however their remuneration and benefits are not paid by the ABS, and are disclosed in the Australian Government's Consolidated Financial Statements.

4.2. Related Party Disclosures

AASB 124 *Related Party Disclosures* requires the ABS to disclose transactions with its related parties. Where KMP has an association with an entity where a conflict has the potential to arise, in addition to the duty to disclose that association, the KMP absents him/herself from both the discussion and the decision-making process.

Related party relationships

The ABS is an Australian Government controlled entity. Related parties of the ABS are:

- KMPs as outlined in 4.1;
- Close family members of KMPs; and
- Organisations controlled by KMPs and their close family members.

Related parties to the ABS also include the Portfolio Minister, Cabinet Ministers and other Australian Government entities.

Transactions with related parties

Given the breadth of Government activities, related parties may transact with the government sector in the same capacity as ordinary citizens. Such transactions include the payment or refund of taxes, receipt of a Medicare rebate or higher education loans. These transactions are not disclosed in this note.

There were no transactions, procurements, loans, grants, guarantees or debts forgiven to any KMP or their close family members or organisation controlled by these KMP and/or by their close family members. Transactions with KMP related entities that occur in the normal course of the ABS' operations are incidental and conducted on normal terms and conditions no more favourable than similar transactions with other employees or customers. Any vendor relationships with such entities are at arm's length and comply with the ABS' procurement policy.

All transactions were conducted under normal terms and conditions and exclude the GST.

5. Managing Uncertainties

This section analyses how the Australian Bureau of Statistics manages the financial risks within its operating environment.

5.1. Contingent Assets and Liabilities

The ABS did not have any contingent assets or liabilities at 30 June 2021 for departmental and administered (2020: Nil).

5.2. Financial Instruments

	2021	2020
	\$'000	\$'000
Note 5.2A: Categories of Financial Instruments		
Financial assets at amortised cost		
Cash and cash equivalents	4,508	6,087
Trade and other receivables	4,131	2,921
Total financial assets at amortised cost	8,639	9,008
Total financial assets	8,639	9,008
Financial Liabilities		
Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost		
Trade creditors and accruals	13,791	23,121
Total financial liabilities measured at amortised cost	13,791	23,121
Total financial liabilities	13,791	23,121
Note 5.2B: Net Losses on Financial Assets		
Financial assets at amortised cost		
Impairment	-	2
Net gains on financial assets at amortised cost	-	2

Accounting Policy

Financial Assets

In accordance with AASB 9 *Financial Instruments*, the ABS classifies its financial assets in the following categories:

- a) financial assets at fair value through profit or loss;
- b) financial assets at fair value through other comprehensive income; and
- c) financial assets measured at amortised cost.

The classification depends on both the ABS’ business model for managing the financial assets and contractual cash flow characteristics at the time of initial recognition. Financial assets are recognised when the entity becomes a party to the contract and, as a consequence, has a legal right to receive or a legal obligation to pay cash and derecognised when the contractual rights to the cash flows from the financial asset expire or are transferred upon trade date.

The ABS classifies and recognises its financial assets, and financial liabilities at amortised cost.

Financial Assets at Amortised Cost

Financial assets included in this category need to meet two criteria:

1. the financial asset is held in order to collect the contractual cash flows; and
2. the cash flows are solely payments of principal and interest (SPPI) on the principal outstanding amount.

Amortised cost is determined using the effective interest method.

Effective Interest Method

Income is recognised on an effective interest rate basis for financial assets that are recognised at amortised cost.

Impairment of Financial Assets

Financial assets are assessed for impairment at the end of each reporting period based on expected credit losses, using the general approach which measures the loss allowance based on an amount equal to lifetime expected credit losses where risk has significantly increased, or an amount equal to 12-month expected credit losses if risk has not increased.

The simplified approach for trade, contract and lease receivables is used. This approach always measures the loss allowance as the amount equal to the lifetime expected credit losses.

A write-off constitutes a derecognition event where the write-off directly reduces the gross carrying amount of the financial asset.

Financial Liabilities

Financial liabilities are classified as either financial liabilities at 'fair value through profit or loss' or other financial liabilities.

Financial liabilities are recognised and derecognised upon 'trade date'.

Financial Liabilities at Amortised Cost

Financial liabilities, including borrowings, are initially measured at fair value, net of transaction costs. These liabilities are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, with interest expense recognised on an effective interest basis.

Supplier and other payables are recognised at amortised cost. Liabilities are recognised to the extent that the goods or services have been received (and irrespective of having been invoiced).

All payables are expected to be settled within 12 months except where indicated.

6. Other Information

6.1. Current/non-current distinction for assets and liabilities

	2021	2020
	\$'000	\$'000
Note 6.1A: Current/non-current distinction for assets and liabilities		
Assets expected to be recovered in:		
No more than 12 months		
Cash and cash equivalents	4,508	6,087
Trade and other receivables	99,449	82,711
Prepayments	10,362	9,704
Total no more than 12 months¹	114,319	98,502
More than 12 months		
Leasehold improvements	28,488	30,921
Buildings	134,444	148,340
Plant and equipment	18,023	17,133
Intangibles	84,006	95,656
Prepayments	2,377	3,237
Total more than 12 months	267,338	295,287
Total assets	381,657	393,789
Liabilities expected to be settled in:		
No more than 12 months		
Suppliers	13,791	23,121
Other payables	54,343	40,761
Leases	17,978	13,851
Employee leave	30,706	27,755
Total no more than 12 months¹	116,818	105,488
More than 12 months		
Other payables	2,108	1,354
Leases	122,542	138,085
Employee leave	83,745	81,079
Other	1,979	1,417
Total more than 12 months	210,374	221,935
Total liabilities	327,192	327,423

¹ The negative net current assets and liabilities position primarily relates to the level of unearned revenue

1. The negative net current assets and liabilities position primarily relates to the level of unearned revenue.

Introduction

As an Australian Government agency, the ABS is accountable to the Parliament and ultimately the public through the Treasury Ministers, the Parliamentary Committee process, and the tabling of its annual report.

As the Accountable Authority for the ABS, the Australian Statistician is required to establish and maintain an appropriate system of risk oversight and management for the ABS. This includes having internal controls which support ABS staff members to undertake their responsibilities in a way that meets community expectations of public accountability, probity, and transparency.

The ABS corporate governance arrangements contribute to the effective operation of the ABS through transparent decision-making, accountable leadership, sound risk management, and effective planning and review processes.

Governance fora

ABS governance fora make decisions, seek and provide advice, and consult and share information. ABS governance committees identify ABS priorities; review and approve policies and strategies; assess and respond to risks; oversee the implementation of new or revised controls; and monitor performance.

As a result of a review of governance arrangements, the ABS Executive Board re-aligned committee structures during 2020–21, reducing the number of sub-committees. ABS governance fora at 30 June 2021 are outlined in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1: Governance fora, at 30 June 2021

Primary governance boards
Executive Board
The Executive Board (EB) supports the Australian Statistician to provide leadership and strategic oversight of the ABS. It also assists the Australian Statistician, as the authorised decision maker under the PGPA Act, to determine direction, policy, and priorities, and ensure the efficient, economical, and ethical operation of the ABS.
Audit Committee
The ABS Audit Committee provides independent assurance and advice to the Australian Statistician on financial and performance reporting, risk oversight and management, and the system of internal controls - including those applied to ensure legislative compliance and the execution of ABS functions. More information on the Audit Committee is provided below.
Sub-committees to the Executive Board
Enterprise Management Committee
The Enterprise Management Committee is the sole sub-committee to the EB and is responsible for the management, coordination, and planning of allocated resources; risk management; and monitoring the delivery of enterprise projects.
Advisory committees
2021 Census Delivery Committee
The 2021 Census Delivery Committee was responsible for monitoring and reviewing preparations for the 2021 Census including providing advice on design principles, scope and budget, risks, operations, privacy, and security.
2021 Census Executive Board
The 2021 Census Board provided advice to help achieve the 2021 Census Program objectives. It monitored the planning, development, operation, and delivery of the 2021 Census Program.
Australian Statistics Advisory Council
The Australian Statistics Advisory Council (ASAC) provides independent advice to both the Minister responsible for the ABS and the Australian Statistician on improvement of statistical services, longer-term statistical priorities, and other relevant matters. It also reports to the Parliament annually. More information on ASAC is provided below.
Collections Program Committee

The Collections Program Committee is responsible for overseeing, monitoring, and prioritising the statistical collection schedule including managing risks and considering potential new approaches and efficiencies.
Disclosure Review Committee
The Disclosure Review Committee advises the Chief Methodologist on the disclosure risks and mitigation strategies associated with the dissemination of microdata and, on an exception basis, aggregate statistics. The Committee is empowered to initiate reviews to improve procedures, processes, and policies, or undertake investigations where warranted or where directed by the Executive Board.
Labour Statistics Advisory Group
The Labour Statistics Advisory Group informs internal and external stakeholders on strategies and decisions related to the labour statistics program.
Methodology Advisory Committee
The Methodology Advisory Committee provides expert advice to the Chief Methodologist on methodological issues that arise across the production of national statistics e.g. survey design, data linkage, analysis, confidentialisation, and dissemination.
National Health and Safety Committee
The National Health and Safety Committee enables the ABS, its workers, and their representatives to discuss organisational work, health, and safety (WHS) matters. The Committee considers WHS information and issues; makes decisions on WHS matters; and makes recommendations to the People Committee.
People Committee
The People Committee is responsible for monitoring and prioritisation of operational decisions associated with people and capability functions. It includes representatives from each of the ABS diversity networks.

Notable changes to governance fora during 2020–21:

- The Resource Prioritisation Committee changed its name to the Enterprise Management Committee in February 2021.
- The Collections Program Committee was created in February 2021 to oversee the statistical collections schedule. It replaced the Data Innovations and Statistical Strategy Committee.
- The Economic Statistics Advisory Group (ESAG) was established for the user community to provide feedback on ABS developments in the field of economic statistics. ESAG ceased in August 2020, shifting to direct engagement with members and their networks for more timely advice.
- The Population and Social Statistics Advisory Group (PSSAG) was established for stakeholders to provide feedback on ABS developments in the field of population and social statistics. PSSAG ceased in August 2020, shifting to direct engagement with stakeholders in bilateral conversations or working in smaller groups.
- The Regional and Agriculture Statistics Advisory Group (RASAG) was established to guide the ABS in its strategy for the 2020–21 Agricultural Census and regional data needs. RASAG was dissolved in March 2021 shifting to more flexible consultation arrangements on subject specific matters.
- The Security Committee ceased in December 2020, replaced by direct reporting between the Chief Information Officer and the Chief Operating Officer, with regular briefings to the EB on significant security updates.
- The State Statistical Forum (SSF) supported interactions between the ABS and the states and territories to address common statistical issues. SSF ceased in August 2020 to reduce duplication with other committees with similar membership.

Audit Committee

The Audit Committee provided independent advice to the Australian Statistician on the appropriateness of ABS financial and performance reporting and the systems of risk management and internal controls. The Committee’s functions are documented in the [ABS Audit Committee Charter](#), which can be viewed on the ABS website.

There were four external Audit Committee members (including the Chair) and one internal member during the reporting period. Membership details, including the experience and expertise of each external member, are provided in Table 6.2 below. Due to changes to the [Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule](#) (the PGPA Rule), the ABS Audit Committee ceased having an internal member from 1 July 2021.

Table 6.2: Audit Committee membership, 2020–21

Name	Qualifications, knowledge, skills, and experience	Meeting attendance	Total annual remuneration (\$, GST inclusive)
Jennifer Clark (Chair) (External)	<p>Background</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Senior executive leadership roles in corporate finance and investment banking. <p>Experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extensive board and committee roles as a Non-Executive Director and Chair or member of over 20 audit, risk and finance committees in the Commonwealth and private sectors over the past 30 years. Focus on governance and risk in relation to financial and performance reporting, audit, risk management, and project management.• Currently Deputy Chair Australian Maritime Safety Authority; Board member Australian Payments Network Limited; Chair, Deputy Chair, or independent Member in the Audit Committee of a number of Commonwealth entities. <p>Membership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.	7/7	\$42,350
Loftus Harris (External)	<p>Background</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experienced company chairman, director, and advisor.• CEO and senior executive in	7/7	\$24,640

	<p>State Government and Commonwealth departments. Former Senior Australian Trade Commissioner.</p> <p>Experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experienced audit and risk committee member for over 15 years.• Extensive corporate governance and strategy experience. <p>Specialised knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategic economic development, international trade and investment, major events. <p>Membership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and past National President of the Australian Institute of Export.		
Will Laurie (External)	<p>Background</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Senior executive leadership roles in professional accounting and audit firms. <p>Experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experienced external member or chair of audit and risk committees for Commonwealth and ACT entities.• Partner of Price Waterhouse and PricewaterhouseCoopers 1980–2000. Managing Partner Price Waterhouse and PricewaterhouseCoopers, Canberra Office 1992–2000.• Chairman Boyce Chartered Accountants 2001–2009.• Chairman birdsnest (on-line retailer) and Tarahawk Pty Ltd (property management). <p>Specialised knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expertise in Commonwealth financial and performance management, measurement, and reporting.	7/7	\$24,420
Jennifer	Experience	7/7	\$23,320

Scott (External)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extensive experience in leadership and advisory roles in financial and digital business transformation.• Founder of Humans Meet Digital, providing guidance to companies on how to use technology to create long-term commercial advantage.• Former COO for eBay's European Finance team and former CFO for Expedia's Corporate Travel, Affiliate and Advertising Divisions. <p>Specialised knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expertise in the application of digital technology for business transformation, private sector accountancy and finance.		
Sybille McKeown (Internal)	<p>Program Manager, ABS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 July 2020 – 1 November 2020: Methodology Transformation Branch• 2 November 2020 – 31 May 2021: Labour and Income Indicators Branch• 1 June 2021 – 30 June 2021: Location Insights Branch	7/7	N/A

Australian Statistics Advisory Council

The Australian Statistics Advisory Council (ASAC, the Council) is established under the [Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975](#). As set out in the Act, the role of the Council in 2020-21 was to provide independent advice to the Minister responsible for the ABS and the Australian Statistician on:

- the improvement, extension, and coordination of statistical services provided for public purposes in Australia
- annual and longer-term priorities and programs of work that should be adopted in relation to major aspects of the provision of those statistical services
- any other matters relating generally to those statistical services.

The Chairperson of the Council is Professor Gary Banks AO, Professorial Fellow at the Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research. The Council reports annually to the Parliament.

Further information on ASAC and its activities can be found in its annual report which is available on the [ABS website](#).

Fraud control

The ABS Fraud Control Plan is reviewed and updated at least biennially. The ABS also reviews the Fraud Control Plan when there is evidence of significant change in the operating environment and/or when operational changes significantly change its fraud risk exposure.

A comprehensive independent fraud risk assessment was concluded in February 2020. An additional assessment was conducted in April 2020 to consider changes in procedures and policy to support staff and contractors working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic. The independent assessment found that while the nature of fraud risk had not fundamentally changed, the uncertainties relating to cyber-security were increasing. The Fraud Control Plan was subsequently updated to reflect additional measures introduced to strengthen controls for risks associated with higher numbers of staff working away from the office environment.

Fraud awareness continues to be an integral part of the ABS' commitment to fraud control. Staff are regularly reminded of the need to protect public resources, personal information, and market sensitive information. The annual International Fraud Awareness Week is used to raise awareness of the importance of fraud prevention. In 2020–21, a new Fraud Awareness eLearning module was released to staff, focussing on individuals' obligations to prevent, detect, and report fraud.

Fraud control and incidents of potential fraud were reported to the Audit Committee throughout 2020–21.

Compliance with finance law

In 2020–21, the ABS did not report any matters of significant non-compliance with the finance law to the Finance Minister under paragraph 19(1)(e) of the [Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014](#) (PGPA Rule).

Information Publication Scheme

Agencies subject to the [Freedom of Information Act 1982](#) (FOI Act) are required to publish information as part of the Information Publication Scheme (IPS), outlined in Part II of the FOI Act. Each agency must display a plan on its website showing what information it publishes in accordance with the IPS requirements. The [ABS IPS plan](#) is available on the ABS website.

External scrutiny

Data integration privacy impact assessments

In 2020–21, the ABS published two independent reviews of its privacy impact assessments (PIAs). These PIAs related to data integration projects linking sensitive health data with other ABS data assets such as the Multi-Agency Data Integration Project (MADIP):

1. Privcore independently assessed the ABS PIA of a pilot project to link three datasets from the Cancer Institute of New South Wales to MADIP. The PIA found appropriate measures in place to protect the privacy of individuals and made two recommendations to increase transparency about the collection and use of data. The ABS agreed to fully implement these recommendations.
2. Maddocks independently assessed the ABS PIA of the National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing Data Integration Project, including the integration of data from the study to other ABS data assets including MADIP. The PIA found the project fully complied with each Australian Privacy Principle and adopted best practice to enhance privacy protections.

The PIAs, reports, and all ABS responses, are available on the [ABS website](#).

Statistical Business Transformation Program gateway reviews

The Statistical Business Transformation Program (SBTP) was subject to periodic gateway reviews, with the last of these reviews conducted in September 2020. The gateway reviews were conducted on behalf of the Department of Finance to provide independent assurance and advice to the SBTP senior responsible officer.

The final review focussed on: the SBTP's success in achieving the objectives and benefits set out in the updated business case; expectations for the future; any remedial actions needed to deal with potential risks; program closure; program controls; records management; and lessons learned.

In addition to a comprehensive review of program documentation, the review team interviewed senior staff from across the ABS and independent SBTP executive board members to make their assessment.

The review team rated SBTP as green across all criteria, and found that:

"Both data acquisition and dissemination capabilities are in production and while there is still a substantial on-boarding task to be completed on a business as usual basis over the next two years, the indications are that that will be successful."

Importantly, the new capabilities have already proven their worth as the ABS has been under significant pressure to process new surveys and data sources to provide information to assist the Government in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic."

Australian National Audit Office performance audits

The Australian National Audit Office tabled its performance audit—[Planning for the 2021 Census](#)—in November 2020. It examined ABS preparations for the 2021 Census. The audit found that planning and governance arrangements for the 2021 Census were largely effective, and that the ABS cyber-security strategy was sound.

The audit concluded that ABS planning for the Census was 'partially effective' and made seven recommendations relating to program oversight and assurance, data quality, privacy, and security. The ABS accepted all recommendations and implemented them in full.

Other reviews and reports

There were no other external reviews completed in 2020–21 that had a significant effect on the operations of the entity. There were no adverse comments or findings relating to the ABS from the Auditor-General, a Parliamentary Committee, the Commonwealth Ombudsman, or courts or tribunals. In addition, no individual or administrative review decisions by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner were of significance to the ABS during 2020–21.

Purchasing

The ABS approach to procuring goods and services is consistent with the principles of the [Commonwealth Procurement Rules](#). These rules are applied consistently to procurement activities through the Accountable Authority Instructions, supporting operational guidelines, and procurement frameworks.

Information on significant procurements expected to be undertaken are advertised in an annual procurement plan, available from the [AusTender](#) website. This plan is reviewed and updated throughout the year.

Annual reports contain information about actual expenditure on contracts for consultancies and non-consultancy contracts, while information on contract values is available on the AusTender website.

Initiatives to support small business

The ABS supports small business participation in the Commonwealth Government procurement market. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and small enterprise participation statistics are available on the [Department of Finance website](#).

ABS procurement practices support SMEs by adopting whole-of-government solutions to simplify interactions. This includes complying with the Commonwealth Procurement Framework, using the [Commonwealth Contracting Suite](#) for low-risk procurements valued under \$200,000, and using credit cards for procurements under \$10,000.

The ABS recognises the importance of ensuring that small businesses are paid on time. The [Pay On-Time Survey Performance Reports](#) of Australian Government are available on The Treasury website.

Consultancy contracts

The ABS engages consultants when it requires specialist expertise or when independent research, review, or assessment is required. Decisions to engage consultants during 2020–21 were made in accordance with the PGPA Act and related regulations, including the Commonwealth Procurement Rules and relevant internal policy.

During 2020–21, 21 new consultancy contracts were entered into involving total actual expenditure of \$3,366,176. In addition, 29 ongoing consultancy contracts were active during the period, involving total actual expenditure of \$2,874,066 (see Tables 6.3 and 6.4).

The 2021 Census program was the main driver for the continued use of consultancy services in 2020 –21. Services undertaken include:

- independent assurance
- advertising services
- market research
- management advisory.

Table 6.3: Expenditure on reportable consultancy contracts, 2020–21

	Number	Expenditure \$ (GST inclusive)
New contracts entered into during the reporting period	21	3,366,176
Ongoing contracts entered into during a previous reporting period	29	2,874,066
Total	50	6,240,241(a)

(a) Totals may not equal sum of components due to rounding.

Table 6.4: Organisations receiving a share of reportable consultancy contracts, 2020–21(a)(b)

Name of organisation	Expenditure \$
----------------------	----------------

	(GST inclusive)
BMF Advertising Pty Ltd (ABN 43533837149)	1,502,877
KPMG (ABN 51194660183)	1,085,057
Ogilvy Australia Pty Ltd (ABN 50005373508)	452,135
The Boston Consulting Group Pty Ltd (ABN 70007347131)	451,408
Ernst & Young (ABN 75288172749)	410,690

- (a) Organisations who received the 5 largest shares.
- (b) Based on total expenditure by organisation, not expenditure by contract.

Non-consultancy contracts

During 2020–21, 256 new non-consultancy contracts were entered into involving total actual expenditure of \$24,928,125. In addition, 308 ongoing non-consultancy contracts were active during the period, involving total actual expenditure of \$103,266,801 (see Tables 6.5 and 6.6). The 2021 Census program was the main driver for non-consultancy expenditure in 2020–21.

Table 6.5: Expenditure on reportable non-consultancy contracts, 2020–21

	Number	Expenditure \$ (GST inclusive)
New contracts entered into during the reporting period	256	24,928,125
Ongoing contracts entered into during a previous reporting period	308	103,266,801
Total	564	128,194,926

Table 6.6: Organisations receiving a share of reportable non-consultancy contracts, 2020–21(a)(b)

Name of organisation	Expenditure \$ (GST inclusive)
Evolve FM Pty Ltd (ABN 52605472580)	27,180,198
PricewaterhouseCoopers Consulting (Australia) Pty Ltd (ABN 20607773295)	20,496,167
Adecco Australia Pty Ltd (ABN91006253336)	8,090,641
Print Media Group (ABN 21004110070)	7,821,492
Telstra Corporation Ltd (ABN 33051775556)	4,244,257

- (a) Organisations who received the 5 largest shares.
- (b) Based on total expenditure by organisation, not expenditure by contract.

Exempt contracts

During the 2020–21 financial year, the ABS did not exempt any contracts or standing offers from publication on AusTender on the basis that they would disclose exempt information under the [Freedom of Information Act 1982](#) .

Asset management

The ABS asset management policies are set out in the Accountable Authority Instructions and supporting financial management procedures. They accord with relevant accounting standards and other legislative requirements.

Further details on the ABS asset policies are contained in note [2.2. Non-Financial Assets](#) of the [Financial statements](#).

An asset register is maintained, and an annual stocktake is conducted to ensure the completeness of information recorded in the register. A capital management plan details the strategic asset requirements and funding sources for ongoing asset management and replacement.

Advertising and market research

Under section 311A of the [Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918](#), the ABS is required to disclose payments over \$14,300 (GST inclusive) for advertising and market research in the annual report.

During 2020–21, the ABS’ total expenditure for advertising and market research over the reporting threshold was \$3,723,185 (GST inclusive) (Table 6.7), the vast majority of which was expended on the 2021 Census.

Further information on these advertising campaigns is available on the ABS website and in the reports on Australian Government advertising prepared by the Department of Finance. Those [reports are available on the Department of Finance’s website](#).

Table 6.7: Advertising and market research payments over \$14,300, 2020–21

Organisation	Purpose	Expenditure \$ (GST inclusive)
Market research organisations		
Ipsos Public Affairs Pty Ltd	ATSI brand development	55,522
Hall and Partners Pty Ltd	2021 Census campaign benchmark - tracking and evaluation	49,660
Kantar Public Australia Pty Ltd	2021 Census concept testing	251,570
Advertising (campaign and non-campaign advertising)		
BMF Advertising Pty Ltd	2021 Census	1,502,877
Universal McCann	2021 Census test	16,500
Universal McCann	2021 Census recruitment	502,685
Public relations organisations		
Horizon Communication Group Pty Ltd	2021 Census public relations agency	316,800
33 Creative Pty Ltd	2021 Census Indigenous public relations and creative	302,500
Ogilvy Australia Pty Ltd (trading as Etcom)	2021 Census CALD public relations and creative	440,000
WildBear Entertainment Pty Ltd	2021 Census education videos	27,379
Internal media monitoring services		
Isentia Pty Ltd	Media monitoring services	29,365
Streem Pty Ltd	Media monitoring services	228,327
Total payments over \$14,300 (GST inclusive)		3,723,185

Introduction

The human resource management function is a key enabler for ensuring the ABS workforce has the capability and capacity to mobilise the right people in the right place at the right time, to achieve its objectives.

As at 30 June 2021, there were a total of 3,779 operative and inoperative staff employed by the ABS, including:

- 3,212 operative staff employed under the [Public Service Act 1999](#)
- 110 inoperative staff employed under the *Public Service Act 1999*
- 443 operative interviewers employed under the [Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975](#)
- 13 inoperative interviewers employed under the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975*
- The Australian Statistician, by statutory appointment under the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975*.

Tables 7.1 to 7.8 provide a breakdown of ABS staffing levels as at 30 June 2021 and compare them with levels as at 30 June 2020. The tables include information on gender, employment type and status, classification, location, and diversity.

Table 7.1: Total ongoing staff by gender, location, and employment status, at 30 June 2020 & 2021 (a)

	At June 30 2020					At June 30 2021				
	Male		Female		Total	Male		Female		Total
Location	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time		Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	
NSW	77	43	50	90	260	85	47	51	96	280
Vic. (b)	230	37	163	135	566	242	37	186	143	609
Qld	67	24	64	81	236	65	21	69	86	241
SA	75	27	75	79	256	66	27	79	84	256
WA	53	18	38	62	171	64	25	47	59	195
Tas.	46	12	36	40	134	42	16	37	45	140
ACT	465	52	413	132	1062	450	46	410	135	1041
NT	7	9	11	15	42	8	8	22	13	51
Total	1020	222	850	634	2727(c)	1022	227	901	661	2813(c)

(a) Counts include the Australian Statistician, interviewers, and inoperative staff.

(b) Includes staff located in offices in Dandenong, Geelong, and Melbourne.

(c) Includes non-binary staff.

Table 7.2: Total non-ongoing staff by gender, location, and employment status, at 30 June 2020 & 2021 (a)

	At June 30 2020					At June 30 2021				
	Male		Female		Total	Male		Female		Total
Location	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time		Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	
NSW	5	3	3	2	13	14	2	17	3	36
Vic.(b)	65	59	82	98	304	79	60	102	112	354
Qld	5	4	7	3	19	13	7	10	4	34
SA	10	4	11	4	29	23	8	19	5	55
WA	14	3	10	0	27	27	3	26	3	59
Tas	5	0	2	1	8	10	6	7	10	33

185.	82	21	63	18	185	162	40	136	32	372
NT	1	0	1	0	2	9	0	14	0	23
Total	187	94	179	126	587(c)	337	126	331	169	966(c)

- (a) Counts include interviewers and inoperative staff.
- (b) Includes staff located in offices in Dandenong, Geelong, and Melbourne.
- (c) Includes non-binary staff.

Table 7.3: Ongoing Public Service Act staff by gender, classification, and employment status, at 30 June 2020 & 2021 (a)(b)(c)

	At June 30 2020(d)					At June 30 2021(e)				
	Male		Female		Total	Male		Female		Total
Classification	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time		Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	
SES 3	1	0	3	0	4	0	0	3	0	3
SES 2	9	0	5	0	14	8	0	3	0	11
SES 1	16	1	11	1	29	14	1	12	0	27
EL 2	71	3	56	10	140	74	3	57	15	149
EL 1	201	20	155	76	452	209	18	160	77	464
APS 6	298	27	226	123	674	300	23	240	113	676
APS 5	192	17	202	98	509	188	18	215	91	512
APS 4	186	13	148	41	389	221	15	199	54	490
APS 3	42	0	43	7	92	6	0	12	4	22
APS 2	1	1	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	2
APS 1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other(f)	2	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0
Total	1019	82	850	356	2308(g)	1021	79	901	354	2356(g)

- (a) Includes all operative and inoperative ABS staff employed under the *Public Service Act 1999*.
- (b) Excludes the Australian Statistician and interviewers.
- (c) Counts are based on nominal classification.
- (d) 2020 includes 112 inoperative ongoing staff (by level: SESB3 – 1 male; SESB2 - 1 female; SESB1 – 1 female; EL2 – 5 male & 5 female; EL1 – 6 male & 17 female; APS6 – 9 male & 27 female; APS5 – 4 male & 23 female; APS4 – 4 male & 8 female; APS3 – 1 female).
- (e) 2021 includes 106 inoperative ongoing staff (by level: SESB2 – 1 male; EL2 – 4 male & 3 female; EL1 – 7 male & 13 female; APS6 – 12 male & 27 female; APS5 – 4 male & 19 female; APS4 – 6 male & 10 female).
- (f) All staff included in the ‘Other’ category at 30 June 2020 were cadets.
- (g) Includes non-binary staff.

Table 7.4: Non-ongoing Public Service Act staff by gender, classification, and employment status, at 30 June 2020 & 2021 (a)(b)(c)

	At June 30 2020(d)					At June 30 2021(e)				
	Male		Female		Total	Male		Female		Total
Classification	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time		Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	

	time	time	time	time		time	time	time	time	
SES 3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SES 2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SES 1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
EL 2	3	7	2	2	14	0	7	3	3	13
EL 1	8	6	5	3	22	9	5	10	3	27
APS 6	42	9	29	6	86	73	9	45	10	137
APS 5	42	4	46	9	101	85	9	96	10	200
APS 4	71	5	78	21	176	114	9	126	19	270
APS 3	19	11	18	8	56	52	31	46	33	163
APS 2	2	52	1	77	132	3	56	5	91	155
APS 1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	187	94	179	126	587(f)	337	126	331	169	966(f)

- (a) Includes all operative and inoperative ABS staff employed under the *Public Service Act 1999*.
- (b) Excludes interviewers.
- (c) Counts are based on nominal classification.
- (d) 2020 includes 2 inoperative non-ongoing staff (by level: APS6 - 1 female; APS5 – 1 female).
- (e) 2021 includes 4 inoperative non-ongoing staff (by level: EL2 - 1 female; APS5 – 2 female; APS3 – 1 female).
- (f) Includes non-binary staff.

Table 7.5: Public Service Act staff by location and employment type, at 30 June 2020 & 2021 (a)(b)

	At 30 June 2020(c)			At 30 June 2021(d)		
Location	Ongoing	Non-ongoing	Total	Ongoing	Non-ongoing	Total
NSW	162	13	175	170	36	206
Vic.(e)	479	304	783	517	354	871
Qld	169	19	188	170	34	204
SA	208	29	237	205	55	260
WA	120	27	147	139	59	198
Tas.	104	8	112	104	33	137
ACT	1046	185	1231	1020	372	1392
NT	20	2	22	31	23	54
Total	2308	587	2895	2356	966	3322

- (a) Includes all operative and inoperative ABS staff employed under the *Public Service Act 1999*.
- (b) Excludes the Australian Statistician and interviewers.
- (c) Includes 112 inoperative ongoing staff and 2inoperative non-ongoing staff at 30 June 2020.
- (d) Includes 106 inoperative ongoing staff and 4inoperative non-ongoing staff at 30 June 2021.
- (e) Includes staff located in offices in Dandenong, Geelong, and Melbourne.

Table 7.6: Number of interviewers by location and employment type, at 30 June 2020 & 2021 (a)

	At 30 June 2020(b)	At 30 June 2021(c)
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Location	Ongoing	Non-ongoing	Total	Ongoing	Non-ongoing	Total
NSW	98	0	98	110	0	110
Vic.	87	0	87	92	0	92
Qld	67	0	67	71	0	71
SA	48	0	48	51	0	51
WA	51	0	51	56	0	56
Tas.	30	0	30	36	0	36
ACT	15	0	15	20	0	20
NT	22	0	22	20	0	20
Total	418	0	418	456	0	456

- (a) Includes all operative and inoperative interviewers.
- (b) Includes 11 inoperative ongoing interviewers at 30 June 2020.
- (c) Includes 13 inoperative ongoing interviewers at 30 June 2021.

Workforce strategy

The *ABS Workforce Strategy 2019–23* describes the strategic roadmap for building ABS workforce capability and driving high organisational performance. It helps position the ABS as an ‘employer of choice’, with a focus on purpose, people, place, and partnerships as motivators for current and future staff. The *ABS Workforce Strategy* is currently being reviewed for 2021–25.

Workforce planning

Workforce planning supports continued delivery of enhanced public value by building organisational capability and statistical expertise that enables the ABS to deliver trusted and reliable official statistics required by Australia’s decision makers.

In context, workforce planning supports the implementation of the Workforce Strategy, embedding organisation-wide capability to plan for, and respond to, external influences and changing business requirements. It ensures that the ABS workforce is well equipped to meet cyclical business needs and rises to the challenge of measuring a changing economy, population, society, and environment.

Shaping the flexible work environment

The ABS offers a range of flexible working arrangements to its staff as part of its quality work environment commitment. These include but are not limited to ‘flex time’, part-time arrangements, job sharing, and teleworking.

In 2020–21, the ABS saw a significant increase in the uptake of flexible work arrangements by staff because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The increase in the number of staff working from home significantly changed the perceptions of flexible working practices in the ABS.

The ABS undertook a flexible work pilot in 2020–21 to understand the personal and operational impacts of an increase in flexible working. The purpose of the pilot was to:

1. determine optimal flexible work practices from a productivity, risk, sustainability, and innovation perspective
2. develop and modify guidelines, business processes, capabilities, and any other organisational design elements required to support implementation
3. continue to monitor the emergence of any potential long-term unintended consequences of extended flexible work practices.

The results of the pilot highlighted the positive influence flexible work has on workforce diversity, recruitment, retention, and staff engagement.

The report has been shared with other Australian Public Service (APS) agencies, as they review and adjust their flexible work practices.

Workplace diversity and inclusion

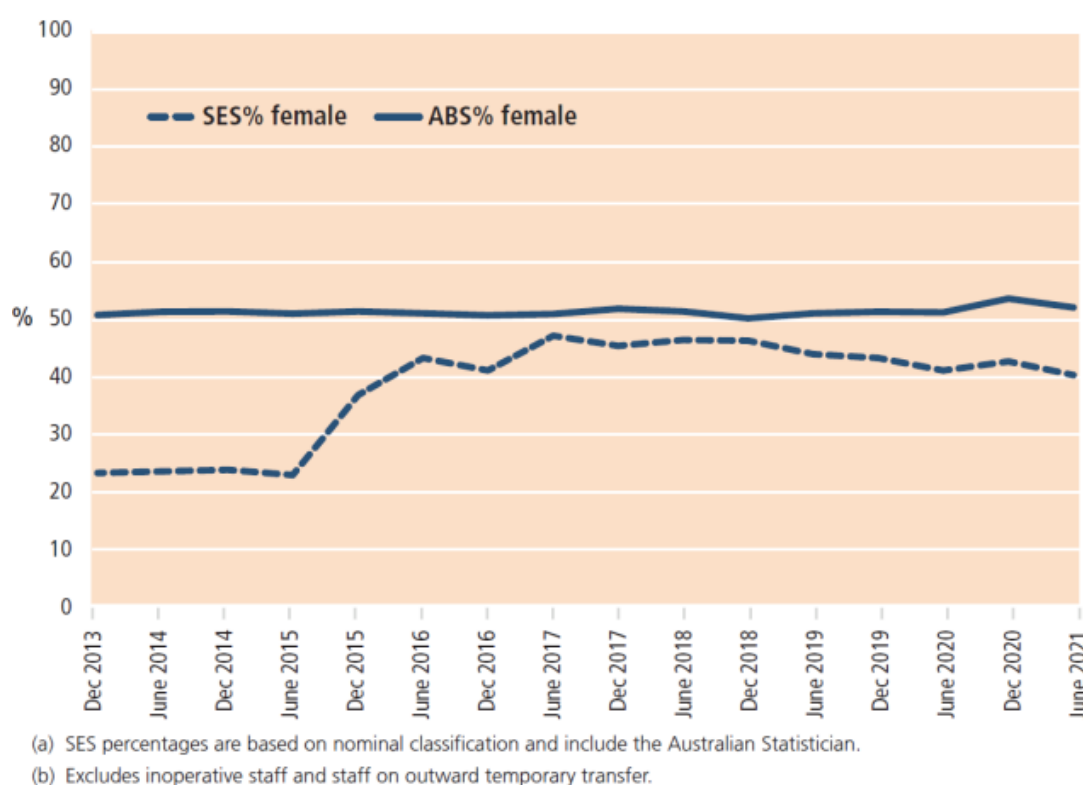
The ABS is committed to building an inclusive and diverse culture. The [ABS Inclusion and Diversity Strategy 2018–21](#) sets the ABS intention to continue to create diverse and inclusive workplaces that reflect the Australian community, and enable staff to best apply their diverse skills, perspectives, and experiences. The *ABS Inclusion and Diversity Strategy* is currently being reviewed and updated for 2022–25.

The ABS has six staff networks designed for staff to connect, share knowledge and experiences, and foster meaningful and sustainable relationships celebrating and promoting inclusion and diversity in the ABS. The networks, supported by 11 senior Inclusion and Diversity Champions and four Senior Executive Sponsors, are open to diversity group staff and allies:

- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) – sharing knowledge and experiences of people across a range of cultural backgrounds.
- Disability and Carers – creating supportive relationships for staff with disability and caring responsibilities.
- Gender Equity – creating inclusion and reducing bias across all gender identities.
- Neurodiversity – for staff who are (or think they may be) neurodivergent, their managers, and colleagues.
- Pride – bringing together people who may identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer (LGBTI+).
- Yoompla – supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

The Australian Statistician, Dr David Gruen, continued to drive inclusion and diversity initiatives in his role as a Champion of Change for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Since June 2016, the ABS has maintained female representation at over 40% in its Senior Executive Service (SES) (see figure 7.1). According to the [Champions of Change Coalition Impact Report 2020](#) the ABS was one of only four (out of 17) organisations that achieved the 40% or above target for female representation in identified role types.

Figure 7.1: Proportion of female staff in the ABS, SES and all staff, December 2013 to June 2021(a)(b)



The ABS is committed to attracting diverse groups by ensuring its recruitment and selection processes are inclusive. Actions undertaken in 2020–21 include:

- incorporating the following statement in advertisements for technical roles: *‘Did you know that research shows that men apply to jobs when they meet an average of 60% of the criteria? Women and other marginalised people tend to only apply when they check every box. If you think you have what it takes, but don’t necessarily meet every single point on the job description or skills, please still apply or get in touch with the contact officer to find out more’.*
- Changing minimum suitability requirements to ‘most or all’ from must meet.
- All information and communication technology (ICT) panels had a female member, and five of seven advertised ICT roles in the first half of 2021 had a female contact person and/or a female Chair.
- Limiting selection criteria, using plain language, and ensuring gender and diversity group representation on

panels.

Fostering inclusion

To support ABS commitment to be an inclusive and diverse organisation, in 2020–21 the ABS:

- Established Inclusion and Diversity Sponsor roles for each of the ABS staff networks.
- Ranked first amongst large APS agencies in ‘creating a diverse workplace’ and ‘supporting and promoting an inclusive culture’ in the *2020 APS Employee Census*.
- Enhanced its diversity metrics with the inclusion of a question for staff to self-identify as neurodiverse in internal staff surveys and the ABS-only component of the APS Agency Employee Survey.
- Released the LGBTI+, Culture Inclusion, and Age Inclusion eLearning modules from the SBS Inclusion Program series to support manager and staff capability development and cultural understanding.
- Expanded and rebranded the Leveraging Asperger's and Autism Network to include all elements of neurodiversity.
- Delivered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness training to managers and teams welcoming new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander recruits including Census staff.
- Produced a ‘You Can't Ask that’ video series sharing the experiences of the Neurodiversity Network members and answering questions on neurodiversity.
- Promoted and celebrated days of significance and importance (virtually, where COVID-19 pandemic restriction prevented face to face). For example, the ABS celebrated NAIDOC Week, Wear it Purple Day, International Women’s Day, and International Day of People with Disability.
- Used a range of recruitment activities aimed at making the ABS workforce more representative of the Australian population.

Multicultural access and equity

The ABS is committed to improving engagement and responding to the needs of Australians from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Strategies and policies are developed that are accessible and inclusive, and engagement strategies are developed as required. For example, the 2021 Census program has employed Inclusive Strategy Managers to engage with and ensure accurate counting of CALD communities in the 2021 Census.

Workforce diversity profile

Table 7.7: Public Service Act Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff by employment type, at 30 June 2020 & 2021(a)(b)

	At 30 June 2020	At 30 June 2021
Ongoing	34	42
Non-ongoing	3	13
Total	37	55

(a) Includes all operative and inoperative staff employed under the *Public Service Act 1999*.

(b) Excludes interviewers.

Table 7.8: Number of Public Service Act staff identifying as having disability by employment type, at 30 June 2020 & 2021(a)(b)

	At 30 June 2020	At 30 June 2021
Ongoing	63	59
Non-ongoing	10	23
Total	73	82

(a) Includes all operative and inoperative staff employed under the *Public Service Act 1999*.

(b) Excludes interviewers.

(b) Excludes interviewers.

Disability reporting mechanism

The National Disability Strategy is Australia's overarching framework for disability reform. It acts to ensure the principles underpinning the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities are incorporated into Australia's policies and programs that affect people with disability, their families, and carers.

All levels of government will continue to be held accountable for the implementation of the strategy through biennial progress reporting to the Council of Australian Governments. Progress reports can be found at www.dss.gov.au .

Disability reporting is included in the Australian Public Service Commission's State of the Service reports and the APS Statistical Bulletin. These reports are available at www.apsc.gov.au .

People development

In line with the *ABS Workforce Strategy 2019–23*, the ABS is building and reshaping its workforce capability to ensure the right people with the right skills can be easily identified and mobilised.

Key achievements in 2020–21

The ABS uses a blended learning model that incorporates e-learning, face-to-face, and virtual learning opportunities. A total of 24,200 course completions were recorded in 2020–21. This mostly included statistical capability, leadership, management, and diversity and inclusion courses. LinkedIn Learning was also leveraged to provide additional online learning options for staff development.

ABS staff viewed 25,143 videos, completing 478 courses. The top skills learners developed are in Microsoft Excel, project management, leadership, data analysis, and data visualisation.

A variety of facilitation workshops were implemented to support the organisation, including 31 Train the Trainer sessions building skillsets and efficiency within business areas. There were 264 staff who participated in the Hermann Brain Dominance Instrument (HBDI) as either team workshops or individual debriefs. HBDI has been used to support staff and teams to understand and leverage whole-brain thinking. To date, a total of 755 staff have participated in HBDI sessions since 2019. Other diagnostic tools included the Life Styles Inventory and Emotional Quotient Inventory, completed by 46 staff in total.

In January 2021, the ABS recruited 45 graduates to participate in its Graduate Development Program. The program included workshops, seminars, group projects, SES shadowing, and rotations for graduates to build their professional networks and capability.

The ABS supported partner organisations across state/territory and Australian governments in their capability development. This support was provided through access to statistical training via an external Learning Management System. 518 users across six organisations accessed this training from July 2020 to June 2021. In total, there have been 937 users across 16 agencies who have accessed the external Statistical Learning Management System since its inception in 2016.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, alternative learning solutions have been implemented as a substitute for some face-to-face training activity. Specifically:

- The special seminar series ‘Leading, Working, and Thriving Virtually’ has continued to be delivered with 18 sessions presented from July 2020 to June 2021. There was a total of 4,788 views across 18 seminars, 2,984 of these were live views and 1,804 were on-demand views.
- The 2021 Graduate Development Program continued to adapt its delivery from its traditional approach of primarily face-to-face delivery, to a blend of virtual and face-to-face delivery.

Recruitment

The ongoing efficiency and effectiveness of the ABS depends on attracting, retaining, and deploying the right people with diverse experiences and skillsets into appropriate roles.

Key achievements in 2020–21

In 2020–21, ABS led the recruitment of data graduates across the APS, with 24 agencies seeking over 250 data graduates to commence in their 2022 programs.

National Recruitment also led attraction and recruitment campaigns resulting in:

- 44 ABS graduate commencements
- 195 ongoing engagements (76 of these were ABS non-ongoing staff who accepted an ongoing position, and 19 were permanent transfers into the ABS from other APS agencies)
- 784 new temporary office-based staff (including 26 temporary transfers from another agency)
- 139 promotions
- 87 ongoing field interviewers
- Over 700 temporary internal mobility placements.

The ABS also partnered with Adecco Australia to attract, assess, and select over 30,000 temporary staff to help deliver the 2021 Census.

Workplace health and safety

The ABS is committed to a proactive and collaborative approach to the management of workplace health, safety, and wellbeing. Specialist teams of work health and safety (WHS) advisors and rehabilitation specialists focus on wellbeing at work, preventing injury and illness, early intervention if injury or illness occurs, and rehabilitation and return to work programs.

ABS specialist teams support the functions of the field and site-based Health and Safety Committees, which advise the National Health and Safety Committee and the People Committee to design and implement health and wellbeing initiatives and regulate WHS policy and procedures. A significant achievement in 2020–21 was the redevelopment of the ABS WHS Management System.

The workplace response to the COVID-19 pandemic enabled staff to work remotely when required per jurisdiction-specific health directions. A range of initiatives to support staff wellbeing were quickly implemented and were monitored through regular wellbeing surveys.

Workplace health and safety regulation

There are several specific WHS roles in the ABS filled by trained staff. These include WHS officers, first aid officers, health and safety representatives, and fire wardens. These positions have been occupied with appropriately skilled and trained ABS staff throughout 2020–21.

The ABS has one national, one field-based, and eight site-based Health and Safety Committees. These committees met quarterly as required in 2020–21 and, in addition to business-as-usual items, consulted on and finalised the new ABS WHS Strategy 2021–25 and implemented new safety systems of work for field interviewers.

Provisional Improvement Notices, investigations, and inspections

There were no Provisional Improvement Notices issued by health and safety representatives under the [Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#) (WHS Act). Further, there were no improvement notices issued by Comcare (the regulator) under the WHS Act during the period.

Under the WHS Act, the ABS is required to report all ‘notifiable incidents’ that occur in the course of conducting ABS business. A notifiable incident is defined as: a death of a person, a serious illness or injury, or a dangerous incident. The ABS reported eight notifiable incidents in the period and eight safety investigations were completed.

The ABS has worked collaboratively with Comcare to implement improved practices to reduce the risk of workplace injury and to reduce workers’ compensation claim numbers and duration.

Rehabilitation and workers' compensation

The ABS return to work performance has contributed to its Comcare workers’ compensation premium rate remaining stable after reduction over four previous years, from 2.21 per cent of payroll in 2015–16 to 0.50 per cent in 2020–21 (Table 7.9). The 2020–21 ABS premium rate is again below the Commonwealth average rate for the third year in a row.

Table 7.9: Comcare workers’ compensation premium rate (percentage of total salary)

	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21
ABS	2.21	2.20	1.50	0.93	0.50	0.50
Overall scheme	1.85	1.72	1.23	1.06	0.85	0.85

The ABS has continued to strengthen its Rehabilitation Management System, the framework for achieving rehabilitation objectives and compliance with the Comcare scheme. The ABS had 18 claims for workers’ compensation within the 2020–21 financial year. Thirteen of these claims have been accepted, four were disallowed, and one claim is still pending determination by Comcare.

A continuing focus on active case management and early intervention played a key role in reducing the impact of compensation claims and loss of productivity. The effectiveness of the ABS approach is reflected in the continued low number of claims and continued reduction in time lost for active claims from 774 weeks in 2016–17 to 394 weeks in 2020–21.

Attendance management

In 2020–21, the average number of days of unscheduled absence per full-time equivalent (FTE) was 11.0 days (Table 7.10).

Table 7.10: Unscheduled absence: days per FTE, 2017–18 to 2020–21(a)(b)

	2017– 18	2018– 19	2019– 20	2020– 21
ABS	12.3	12.0	12.0	11.0
Australian Government (Large Agency) median	12.5	12.7	11.9	n/a(c)

(a) Excludes interviewers, non-ongoing Census Data Processing Centre staff, and Census field staff.

(b) Totals do not include workers compensation.

(c) The Australian Government (Large Agency) median for 2020–21 was not available at the time of preparing this report.

Workplace relations

Executive remuneration

Executive remuneration at the ABS refers to the remuneration of key management personnel (KMP), SES staff, and other highly paid staff. Tables 7.11 and 7.12 outline the remuneration paid to KMP and SES staff. During the reporting period ending 30 June 2021, the ABS identified no other highly paid staff.

The Australian Statistician determines the remuneration for all SES staff at the ABS. In determining SES remuneration arrangements, the Australian Statistician considers:

- recommendations from the ABS SES Remuneration Committee
- contemporary remuneration arrangements and pay relativities with reference to the wider APS
- the Australian Public Service Remuneration Survey (conducted by the Australian Public Service Commission)
- individual performance
- salary relative to other ABS SES staff
- the position of individual salaries in the market.

The ABS SES Remuneration Committee makes recommendations to the Australian Statistician on SES Band 1 and 2 employment conditions and remuneration. The ABS SES Remuneration Committee is comprised of:

- Deputy Australian Statistician, Statistical Services Group
- Deputy Australian Statistician, Census and Data Services Group
- Deputy Australian Statistician, Enterprise Services Group.

Table 7.11: Information about remuneration for key management personnel (KMP), at 30 June 2021^(a)

		Short-term benefits			Post-employment benefits	Other long-term benefits		Termination benefits ^(b)	Total remuneration ^(e)
Name	Position title	Base salary	Bonuses ^(b)	Other benefits and allowances ^(c)	Superannuation contributions	Long service leave ^(d)	Other long-term benefits ^(b)		
David Gruen	Australian Statistician	664,586	0	4,779	95,566	681	0	0	765,613
Jenet Connell	Deputy Australian Statistician	415,221	0	4,779	72,850	1,935	0	0	494,786
Luise McCulloch ^(f)	Deputy Australian Statistician	57,201	0	1,208	15,503	(42,881)	0	0	31,032

	Statistician								
Teresa Dickinson	Deputy Australian Statistician	363,768	0	4,779	69,665	6,130	0	0	444,342
Helen Wilson ^(g)	Deputy Australian Statistician	162,757	0	4,724	28,508	23,155	0	0	219,145
Paul Jelfs ^(h)	Deputy Australian Statistician	80,804	0	1,373	14,196	(1,229)	0	0	95,144
Total^(e)		1,744,338	0	21,643	296,288	(12,208)	0	0	2,050,061

(a) KMP remuneration is prepared on an accrual basis as required under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014* (PGPA Rule).

(b) In 2020-21, there were no bonuses, other long-term benefits, nor termination benefits paid to KMP.

(c) Other benefits and allowances include car parking and related fringe benefits tax, and other allowances.

(d) The negative amount is primarily as a result of a decrease in long service leave provisions due to movements in the bond rate.

(e) Totals may not equal sum of components due to rounding.

(f) Part-year - separated 30 September 2020.

(g) Part-year - appointed 14 December 2020.

(h) Part-year - acting from 31 August 2020 to 11 December 2020.

Table 7.12: Information about remuneration for senior executives, at 30 June 2021^{(a)(b)(c)(d)}

		Short-term benefits ^(e)			Post-employment benefits	Other long-term benefits ^(f)		Termination benefits ^(g)	Total remuneration ^(h)
Total remuneration bands	Number of senior executives	Average base salary	Average bonuses ⁽ⁱ⁾	Average other benefits and allowances	Average superannuation contributions ⁽ⁱ⁾	Average long service leave ^(k)	Average other long-term benefits ⁽ⁱ⁾	Average termination benefits	Average total remuneration
\$0-\$220,000	18	89,844	0	1,677	18,480	(4,332)	0	24,036	129,704
\$220,001-\$245,000	9	194,943	0	3,936	33,707	244	0	0	232,831

\$245,001- \$270,000	16	206,606	0	3,862	37,588	(1,986)	0	9,061	255,130
\$270,001- \$295,000	4	237,475	0	3,921	43,204	2,379	0	0	286,979
\$295,001- \$320,000	4	210,799	0	3,703	43,068	10,608	0	36,242	304,420
\$320,001- \$345,000	3	282,731	0	3,921	48,903	(161)	0	0	335,394

(a) This table is prepared on an accrual basis as required under the PGPA Rule.

(b) In 2020-21, there were 26 fortnightly pays.

(c) This table reports the average total remuneration of Senior Executives who received remuneration during the reporting period.

(d) Those ABS officers that have been classified as key management personnel (as per Table 7.11) have not been included in this table disclosure.

(e) The short-term benefits is comprised of:

1) the average of base salary (including: paid and accrued; paid while on annual leave; paid while on sick leave; higher duties allowance; and purchased annual leave); and

2) the average of other benefits and allowances (motor vehicle allowance, car parking and related fringe benefits tax, and other allowances).

(f) The other long-term benefits is the average amount of long services leave accrued and deferred (more than 12 months) for the reporting period. It also includes the average of any salary paid while on long services leave.

(g) The termination benefits is the average amount of termination payment for the reporting period.

(h) Totals may not equal sum of components due to rounding.

(i) In 2020-21, there were no bonuses or other long-term benefits paid to Senior Executives.

(j) The superannuation contributions is the average of the ABS' superannuation contributions, including productivity component, for the reporting period.

(k) The negative amount is primarily as a result of a decrease in long service leave provisions due to movements in the bond rate.

Employment arrangements

Table 7.13 presents the employment arrangements for ABS staff employed under the [Public Service Act 1999](#) as at 30 June 2021.

Interviewers are engaged under the [Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975](#) in accordance with the [Census and Statistics Regulation 2016](#). The ABS Interviewers Enterprise Agreement 2020 is the employment instrument that applies to ABS interviewers (456 staff as at 30 June 2021).

Census field staff engaged to assist with the undertaking of the Census Operational Readiness Exercise and the 2021 Census of Population and Housing are covered by Collective Determination 2020/01 established under the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975* (3,071 staff as at 30 June 2021).

Table 7.13: ABS employment arrangements, at 30 June 2021(a)

	SES	Non-SES	Total
ABS staff covered by the <i>Australian Bureau of Statistics Enterprise Agreement 2019</i>	0	3279	3279
Individual Flexibility Arrangements (IFA) made under the <i>Australian Bureau of Statistics Enterprise Agreement 2019</i> as at June 30 2021	0	23	23
SES staff covered by Determination under s. 24(1) of the <i>Public Service Act 1999</i> (includes SES staff on long term leave, secondment, and temporary transfer to other agencies)	43	0	43
Total	43	3279	3322

(a) The 23 staff with an IFA are included in the 3,279 ABS staff.

Salary arrangements

The *ABS Enterprise Agreement 2019* outlines the salary arrangements for non-SES ABS staff employed under the [Public Service Act 1999](#) .

Table 7.14: Salary ranges by classification level, at 30 June 2021

	Minimum Salary	Maximum Salary
SES 3	272,510	n/a ^(a)
SES 2	218,008	267,060
SES 1	174,407	212,558
EL 2	129,569	155,874 ^(b)
EL 1	103,786	119,974
APS 6	84,476	95,401

APS 5	75,200	84,468
APS 4	66,852	75,195
APS 3	59,256	66,796
APS 2	52,014	58,649
APS 1	45,485	51,820
Other(c)	60,954	75,195

- (a) There is no maximum salary range for the SES 3 cohort.
- (b) EL2 pay point 4 only accessible as detailed in clauses 15.1 and 15.2 of the *ABS Enterprise Agreement 2019*.
- (c) 'Other' comprised of graduate staff.

There are no performance pay arrangements in the ABS.

Non-salary benefits

The ABS provided a range of non-salary benefits to staff including:

- an annual influenza vaccination program
- mentoring and coaching programs
- capability development programs
- a confidential employee assistance program for staff and their immediate families
- study assistance for eligible staff
- access to flexible working arrangements
- contributions to relevant professional memberships
- airline lounge memberships for eligible staff.

ABS staff are also eligible to participate in salary sacrifice arrangements for non-salary benefits such as novated lease vehicles.

Performance management

The ABS is committed to being a high-performing public agency, promoting a people-oriented culture through focus on leadership, communication, innovation, and engagement.

Office-based staff

Where there are concerns about staff performance, specialist teams work with staff and managers, implementing early strategies to improve performance. In 2020–21, 31 interventions were made with ongoing staff: eight of the 31 improved their performance, three resigned prior to escalation, and 20 are still being actively managed.

In situations where ongoing staff performance concerns did not improve after a set period, ABS managers worked with staff by implementing an informal performance improvement plan (PIP). The ABS initiated one PIP for ongoing office-based staff during 2020–21. The staff member left the organisation prior to PIP completion. Where a staff member's performance has not improved through a PIP, a formal underperformance process commences. No ongoing staff were the subject of formal processes to manage underperformance following a PIP.

Performance improvement processes were initiated for 16 non-ongoing staff. Of these, nine improved their performance and seven resigned; none were terminated early.

ABS interviewers

As with office-based staff, where there are concerns about an interviewer's performance the staff and manager work together to implement an informal PIP. During 2020–21, no ABS interviewers commenced a PIP. No non-ongoing employment contracts were ceased early due to performance or conduct concerns.

Staff misconduct

Office-based staff

During 2020–21 the ABS commenced one investigation into a suspected breach of the [APS Code of Conduct](#) by an ongoing office-based staff member. The investigation resulted in a breach and a sanction applied.

Misconduct proceedings commenced against three non-ongoing staff. Two staff members resigned, and one staff member was going to be terminated but their contract ceased on the day they would have been terminated.

ABS interviewers

There were four misconduct investigations instigated for interviewers. One resulted in a breach and sanction applied, one interviewer resigned at the commencement of the investigation, and two investigations are ongoing.

Appendix A. Resource statements

Entity resource statement 2020-21

	Actual available appropriation for	Payments made	Balance remaining
	2020-21	2020-21	2020-21
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
	(a)	(b)	(a) – (b)
Departmental			
Annual appropriations - ordinary annual service ^{1&2}	564,640	469,325	95,316
Annual appropriations - other services - non-operating ³	27,645	25,402	2,243
Total departmental annual appropriations	592,285	494,727	97,559
Total departmental resourcing	592,285	494,727	97,559
Total resourcing and payments for the ABS	592,285	494,727	97,559

1. Appropriation Act and Supply Act (No. 1) 2020–21, Appropriation Act (No. 3) 2020–21. This may also include prior-year departmental appropriation and section 74 external revenue.
2. Departmental capital budgets are not separately identified in Appropriation Bill (No.1, 3, 5) and form part of ordinary annual services items. For accounting purposes, this amount has been designated as a 'contribution by owner'.
3. Appropriation Act and Supply Act (No. 2) 2020–21.

Expenses for Outcome 1

Outcome 1: Decisions on important matters made by governments, business and the broader community are informed by objective, relevant and trusted official statistics produced through the collection and integration of data, its analysis, and the provision of statistical information.	Budget*	Actual Expenses	Variation
	2020-21	2020-21	2020-21
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
	(a)	(b)	(a) - (b)
Program 1.1: Australian Bureau of Statistics			
Departmental expenses			

Departmental appropriation ¹	471,096	447,613	23,483 ³
Expenses not requiring appropriation in the Budget year ²	33,408	65,701	(32,293) ⁴
Departmental total	504,504	513,314	(8,810)
Total expenses for Program 1.1	504,504	513,314	(8,810)
Outcome 1 totals by appropriation type			
Departmental expenses			
Departmental appropriation	471,096	447,613	23,483
Expenses not requiring appropriation in the budget year ²	33,408	65,701	(32,293)
Departmental total	504,504	513,314	(8,810)
Total expenses for Outcome 1	504,504	513,314	(8,810)
		2019-20	2020-21
Average staffing level (number)			2,619 2,796

* Full-year budget, including any subsequent adjustment made to the 2020-21 budget at Additional Estimates.

1. Departmental appropriation combines ordinary annual services (Appropriation Act Nos. 1 and 3) and retained revenue receipts under section 74 of the PGPA Act 2013.

2. Expenses not requiring appropriation in the Budget year are made up of depreciation and amortisation expenses, resources received free of charge, and impairment and write down of assets, and impact of the bond rates change on the employee provision.

3. The variance is primarily due to the impacts of AASB 16 *Leases*, reduction in travel and employee expenses for data collection due to COVID-19.

4. The variance primarily relates to the impacts of AASB 16 *Leases*, the write-down and impairment of intangible assets, and resources received free of charge which were not budgeted for.

Appendix B: Environmental sustainability

Introduction

In 2020–21, the ABS continued its commitment to the principles of ecologically sustainable development as outlined in the [Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999](#) (EPBC Act). This appendix meets the requirements of sub-section 516A (6) of the EPBC Act.

Alignment of ABS activities to the principles of ecologically sustainable development

In accordance with the principles of ecologically sustainable development, the ABS pursues environmentally positive practices by:

- seeking to minimise adverse environmental impacts from its operations
- complying with relevant Commonwealth, state, and territory environment legislation and the Australian Government's environmental policies and initiatives
- working towards continuously improving environmental performance
- supporting and promoting an environmentally responsible culture.

Contribution to ecologically sustainable development by outcomes funded by the Appropriations Act

The ABS receives appropriation for the purpose of producing statistics on a wide range of social and economic matters which contribute to ecologically sustainable development. The ABS works closely with the community and governments to further build information on environmental statistics to complement the more established information bases on population, society, and the economy.

For more information on ABS products and developments, please refer to the [ABS website](#) for statistics relating to Agriculture, People and Communities (for regional statistics), Environmental management, Energy, Water, Waste, Land, and Ecosystems.

The effect of ABS activities on the environment

The ABS' activities are predominately office-based and affect the environment through:

- energy consumption and greenhouse gas pollution across its offices
- paper consumption
- carbon emissions in transportation
- water usage
- waste sent to landfill, whilst increasing recycling of packaging and waste
- the procurement of environmentally friendly products and technological solutions.

Measures taken to reduce the impact of activities by the ABS on the environment

The ABS seeks to actively manage and improve its performance through targeted initiatives as opportunities arise. Several key initiatives have been:

- Implementing activity-based work fit outs across all ABS offices to decrease office footprints by at least 20%. This has reduced the environmental impact of fit out, furniture production, and the necessary operational services, particularly electricity.
- Reducing energy consumption and waste in fit outs, where possible, by including energy efficient LED lights and lighting systems, smart lighting technologies, and daylight harvesting.
- ABS publications are electronically available on the ABS website, and computer-assisted interviewing is used in place of paper forms, where possible.
- Improving video-conferencing equipment and software, increasing the number of video-conferencing facilities, and supporting virtual teams across offices to reduce the requirement to travel.

- Providing recycling services to all office-based staff, including:
 - recycling paper, bottles, aluminium cans, steel cans, plastic, and cardboard products in all offices
 - recycling mobile phones, batteries, and polystyrene in all sites where contractor packaging removal was not part of the contracts or service agreements
 - maintaining organic recycling of kitchen waste at ABS House in Canberra.
- Renewing servers and storage at end of life, which has delivered a 10% reduction in power usage in the ABS Data Centre.
- Commencing roll out of a new laptop fleet, which meets the Minimum Energy Performance Standards, and is 48% more energy efficient in standby mode.
- Procuring high efficiency multifunction devices, with sustainability features including:
 - black drums using less toner and producing 33% more pages before needing service or replacement
 - spent black toner cartridges doubling as waste bottles, eliminating a consumable part.
- Procuring paper from suppliers who are Supply Nation Certified First Nation businesses, and is fully recycled or Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification certified.
- Purchasing office equipment with a high energy efficiency rating.

All staff have access to flexible working arrangements which has reduced the need to work at ABS offices full-time. This has reduced staff travel to and from offices, and reduced associated office resources use, such as electricity, paper, and furniture.

Reviewing and increasing the effectiveness of those measures

The ABS reviewed its commitment to environmental sustainability performance in 2020–21 and is committed to a refresh of its Environmental Management System in 2021–22, and a reassessment of performance targets.

The ABS also supports staff participation in local Green Teams to raise environmental awareness and develop local initiatives.

Appendix C: Errors and omissions

ABS Annual Report 2018–19

Page 104

The following content was omitted; it should have followed Table 7.14: Salary ranges by classification level, at 30 June 2019.

The ABS provide a range of non-salary benefits to staff including:

- an annual influenza vaccination program
- mentoring and coaching programs
- capability development programs
- a confidential employee assistance program for employees and their immediate families
- study assistance for eligible employees
- access to flexible working arrangements
- contributions to relevant professional memberships
- airline lounge memberships for eligible employees

ABS staff are also eligible to participate in salary sacrifice arrangements for non-salary benefits such as novated lease vehicles.

ABS Annual Report 2019–20

Page 109

The following content was omitted; it should have followed Table 7.14: Salary ranges by classification level, at 30 June 2020.

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The figures for Audit Committee remuneration in Table 6.2: Audit Committee membership 2019–20 were incorrectly published as GST exclusive. These figures should have been published as GST inclusive.

The following content replaces Table 6.2: Audit Committee membership 2019–20.

Table 6.2: Audit Committee membership 2019–20

Member name	Qualifications, knowledge, skills or experience (include formal and informal as relevant)	Number of meetings attended/ total number of meetings	Total annual remuneration (\$, GST inclusive)
Jennifer Clark (Chair)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Background: senior executive leadership roles in corporate finance and investment	6/6	\$36,925

(Chair / External)	<p>finance and investment banking.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extensive board and committee roles as a Non-Executive Director and Chair or member of over 20 audit, risk and finance committees in the Commonwealth and private sectors over the past 30 years: focus on governance and risk in relation to financial and performance reporting, audit, risk management, and project management.• Currently Deputy Chair Australian Maritime Safety Authority, Board member Australian Payments Network Limited; Audit Committee Chair, Deputy Chair or independent Member for a number of Commonwealth entities.• Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.		
Loftus Harris AM (External)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Background: senior and chief executive leadership roles in Commonwealth and State Government entities. Extensive corporate governance experience.• Experienced company chairman, director and advisor. Experienced audit and risk committee member.• Specialised knowledge areas: strategic economic development, international trade and investment, innovation, tourism, and major events.• Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors for 15 years, and past National President of the Australian Institute of Export.	6/6	\$20,158
Will Laurie (External)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Background: senior executive leadership roles in professional accounting and	6/6	\$19,800

(External)	<p>professional accounting and audit firms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experienced external member or chair of 6 Audit and Risk Committees for Commonwealth and ACT entities.• Specialist knowledge area: expertise in Commonwealth financial and performance management, measurement and reporting.• Bachelor of Economics (Syd); Grad Dip Applied Finance and Investment. Partner of Price Waterhouse and PricewaterhouseCoopers 1980–2000. Managing Partner Price Waterhouse and PricewaterhouseCoopers Canberra Office 1992–2000. Chairman Boyce Chartered Accountants 2001–2009. Chairman birdsnest (on-line retailer) and Tarahawk Pt Ltd (property management).		
Jennifer Scott (External)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extensive experience in leadership and advisory roles in financial and digital business transformation. She is the founder of Humans Meet Digital, providing guidance to companies on how to use technology to create long-term commercial advantage. Former COO for eBay’s European finance team and former CFO for Expedia’s Corporate Travel, affiliate and Advertising Divisions.• Expertise in application of digital technology for business transformation, private sector accountancy and finance.	2/2 (Attendance from November 2019)	\$6,600
Stephen Sheehan (External)	Chief Finance Officer, Department of Social Security	4/4 (Attendance from July to November 2019)	0

Jenet Connell	Chief Operating Officer and Deputy Australian Statistician, Corporate Services and Transformation Group	6/6	0
Sybille McKeown	Program Manager, Methodology Transformation Branch	6/6	0

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Glossary

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
Administrative data	Administrative data is information collected by government agencies, businesses, or other organisations for various purposes, including registrations, transactions and record keeping, usually during the delivery of a service.
API	Application Programming Interface – software that allows two applications to talk to each other. They allow machine-to-machine transfer of data from the ABS to users.
APRA	Australian Prudential Regulation Authority
APS	Australian Public Service
APSC	Australian Public Service Commission
ASAC	Australian Statistics Advisory Council
ATO	Australian Taxation Office
Big data	Big data refers to data that contains greater variety, arriving in increasing volumes and with more velocity. It is also known as the three Vs.
BLADE	Business Longitudinal Analysis Data Environment
BOM	Bureau of Meteorology
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
Census	Census of Population and Housing conducted every five years under the authority of the Census and Statistics Act 1905. The Census aims to measure accurately the number of people and dwellings in Australia on Census Night, and a range of their key characteristics.
CFO	Chief Financial Officer
Comcare	The national authority for work health and safety, and workers’ compensation.
COO	Chief Operating Officer
COVID-19	COVID-19 is the name given to the significant novel coronavirus that lead to a global pandemic that is ongoing.
CPI	Consumer Price Index
CTASS	Community Trust in ABS Statistics Survey (a five-yearly independent survey of the general community and informed users).
Customised data request	Also known as a ‘consultancy’; cost-recovered customer requests for ABS data not available for free.
Data integration	Bringing information from different sources together for statistical and research purposes.
DataLab	Facility delivering remote access to data and increased ability to handle large datasets with faster processing through new /external servers.

Distributed denial-of-service attack	A malicious attempt to disrupt normal traffic to a website.
EB	Executive Board
EL	Executive Level - used to denote middle-management staff.
EPBC Act	Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999
ESAG	Economic Statistics Advisory Group
FOI Act	Freedom of Information Act 1982
FTE	Full-time equivalent (relating to staff)
FWP	Forward Work Program
GST	Goods and services tax
HR	Human resources
IFA	Individual flexibility arrangement
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPS	Information Publication Scheme
KMP	Key Management Personnel
MADIP	Multi-Agency Data Integration Project
Microdata	A file where each record or row of the dataset represents information relating to one person, household, or business.
MP	Member of Parliament
n/a	not applicable
NAIDOC	National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee
NHSC	National Health & Safety Committee
Non-survey data	Data that is sourced from methods other than a survey or census, such as big data or administrative data.
Notifiable incident	An incident is notifiable to Comcare if it arises out of the conduct of the business or undertaking by the ABS, and results in the death, serious injury or serious illness of a person or involves a dangerous incident.
ORE	Operational Readiness Exercise of the Census – also known as the Census test.
Pandemic	The worldwide spread of a new disease.
PBS	Portfolio Budget Statement
PEFC	Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification
PGPA Act	Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013
PGPA Rule	Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014
PIA	Privacy Impact Assessment - a systematic assessment of a project that identifies the impact the project might have on the privacy of individuals, and sets out recommendations for managing, minimising, or eliminating that impact.
PIP	Performance Improvement Plan
PSSAG	Population and Social Statistics Advisory Group

RBA	Reserve Bank of Australia
Reportable contract	A contract reported on the AusTender website i.e. any contract with a value of \$10,000 or more
Satellite account	A mechanism for reusing and combining existing information to provide a new perspective.
SBTP	Statistical Business Transformation Program
SDDS	Special Data Dissemination Standard
Secondment	A staff member working temporarily in another agency or department.
SES	Senior Executive Service - used to denote the most senior of APS staff
Significant error	Referring to errors in a statistical release: errors in indicators of national or state significance where there is a possibility a user may have been misled (also known as ‘high level release incidents’).
SME	Small and medium enterprises
SSF	State Statistical Forum
Statistical release	Any product released on the ABS website that has a catalogue number and a reference period, including statistical publications, information papers, research papers, classifications, and standards. Excludes the reissue of any product, and corporate documents such as annual reports, the corporate plan and forward work program.
STEM	Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics
STP	Single Touch Payroll: a recent regulation that dictates when and how businesses report payroll activity to the ATO i.e. submitted digitally after each pay day.
TableBuilder	An online self-help tool which enables users to create tables, graphs, and maps of Census data.
Unscheduled absence	Any form of leave which has not been approved in advance, including bereavement, carers, compensation, sick (both with and without evidence) and unauthorised leave.
Website session	A session is a group of user interactions with the website that takes place within a given time frame e.g. a single session can contain multiple page views, events, social interactions, and ecommerce transactions.
WHS	Work health and safety
WHS Act	Work Health and Safety Act 2011

List of Requirements

PGPA Rule Reference	Part of Report	Description	Requirement
17AD(g)	Letter of transmittal		
17AI	Letter of transmittal	A copy of the letter of transmittal signed and dated by accountable authority on date final text approved, with statement that the report has been prepared in accordance with section 46 of the Act and any enabling legislation that specifies additional requirements in relation to the annual report.	Mandatory
17AD(h)	Aids to access		
17AJ(a)	N/A	Table of contents (print only).	Mandatory
17AJ(b)	N/A	Alphabetical index (print only).	Mandatory
17AJ(c)	Glossary	Glossary of abbreviations and acronyms.	Mandatory
17AJ(d)		List of requirements.	Mandatory
17AJ(e)	Copyright information and contact details	Details of contact officer.	Mandatory
17AJ(f)	Copyright information and contact details	Entity's website address.	Mandatory
17AJ(g)	Copyright information and contact details	Electronic address of report.	Mandatory
17AD(a)	Review by accountable authority		
17AD(a)	Australian Statistician's review	A review by the accountable authority of the entity.	Mandatory
17AD(b)	Overview of the entity		
17AE(1)(a)(i)	Purpose and plan	A description of the role and functions of the entity.	Mandatory
17AE(1)(a)(ii)	Purpose and plan	A description of the organisational structure of the entity.	Mandatory
17AE(1)(a)(iii)	ABS Portfolio Budget Statement outcome and program	A description of the outcomes and programmes administered by the entity.	Mandatory
17AE(1)(a)(iv)	Purpose and plan	A description of the purposes of the entity as included in corporate plan.	Mandatory
17AE(1)(aa)(i)	Purpose and plan	Name of the accountable authority or each member of the accountable authority	Mandatory
17AE(1)(aa)(ii)	Purpose and plan	Position title of the accountable authority or each member of the accountable authority	Mandatory
17AE(1)(aa)(iii)	Purpose and plan	Period as the accountable authority or member of the accountable authority within the reporting period	Mandatory
17AE(1)(b)	N/A	An outline of the structure of the portfolio of the entity.	Portfolio departments - mandatory

17AE(2)	N/A	Where the outcomes and programs administered by the entity differ from any Portfolio Budget Statement, Portfolio Additional Estimates Statement or other portfolio estimates statement that was prepared for the entity for the period, include details of variation and reasons for change.	If applicable, Mandatory
17AD(c)	Report on the Performance of the entity		
	Annual performance Statements		
17AD(c)(i); 16F	Introductory Statement	Annual performance statement in accordance with paragraph 39(1)(b) of the Act and section 16F of the Rule.	Mandatory
17AD(c)(ii)	Report on Financial Performance		
17AF(1)(a)	Independent Auditor's Report	A discussion and analysis of the entity's financial performance.	Mandatory
17AF(1)(b)	Appendix A. Resource statements	A table summarising the total resources and total payments of the entity.	Mandatory
17AF(2)	N/A	If there may be significant changes in the financial results during or after the previous or current reporting period, information on those changes, including: the cause of any operating loss of the entity; how the entity has responded to the loss and the actions that have been taken in relation to the loss; and any matter or circumstances that it can reasonably be anticipated will have a significant impact on the entity's future operation or financial results.	If applicable, Mandatory
17AD(d)	Management and Accountability		
	Corporate Governance		
17AG(2)(a)	Letter of transmittal	Information on compliance with section 10 (fraud systems)	Mandatory
17AG(2)(b)(i)	Letter of transmittal	A certification by accountable authority that fraud risk assessments and fraud control plans have been prepared.	Mandatory
17AG(2)(b)(ii)	Letter of transmittal	A certification by accountable authority that appropriate mechanisms for preventing, detecting incidents of, investigating or otherwise dealing with, and recording or reporting fraud that meet the specific needs of the entity are in place.	Mandatory
17AG(2)(b)(iii)	Letter of transmittal	A certification by accountable authority that all reasonable measures have been taken to deal appropriately with fraud relating to the entity.	Mandatory
17AG(2)(c)	Governance fora	An outline of structures and processes in place for the entity to implement principles and objectives of corporate governance.	Mandatory
17AG(2)(d) – (e)	Fraud control	A statement of significant issues reported to Minister under paragraph 19(1)(e) of the Act that relates to non-compliance with Finance law and action taken to remedy non-compliance.	If applicable, Mandatory
	Audit Committee		
17AG(2A)(a)	Audit Committee	A direct electronic address of the charter determining the functions of the entity's audit committee.	Mandatory
17AG(2A)(b)	Audit Committee	The name of each member of the entity's audit committee.	Mandatory
17AG(2A)(c)	Audit Committee	The qualifications, knowledge, skills or experience of each member of the entity's audit committee.	Mandatory
17AG(2A)(d)	Audit Committee	Information about the attendance of each member of the entity's audit committee at committee meetings.	Mandatory

17AG(2A)(e)	Audit Committee	The remuneration of each member of the entity's audit committee.	Mandatory
External Scrutiny			
17AG(3)	External scrutiny	Information on the most significant developments in external scrutiny and the entity's response to the scrutiny.	Mandatory
17AG(3)(a)	External scrutiny	Information on judicial decisions and decisions of administrative tribunals and by the Australian Information Commissioner that may have a significant effect on the operations of the entity.	If applicable, Mandatory
17AG(3)(b)	External scrutiny	Information on any reports on operations of the entity by the Auditor-General (other than report under section 43 of the Act), a Parliamentary Committee, or the Commonwealth Ombudsman.	If applicable, Mandatory
17AG(3)(c)	External scrutiny	Information on any capability reviews on the entity that were released during the period.	If applicable, Mandatory
Management of Human Resources			
17AG(4)(a)	Introduction	An assessment of the entity's effectiveness in managing and developing employees to achieve entity objectives.	Mandatory
17AG(4)(aa)	Introduction	Statistics on the entity's employees on an ongoing and non-ongoing basis, including the following:(a) statistics on full-time employees;(b) statistics on part-time employees;(c) statistics on gender(d) statistics on staff location	Mandatory
17AG(4)(b)	Introduction	Statistics on the entity's APS employees on an ongoing and non-ongoing basis; including the following: Statistics on staffing classification level; Statistics on full-time employees; Statistics on part-time employees;Statistics on gender;Statistics on staff location;Statistics on employees who identify as Indigenous.	Mandatory
17AG(4)(c)	Workplace relations	Information on any enterprise agreements, individual flexibility arrangements, Australian workplace agreements, common law contracts and determinations under subsection 24(1) of the Public Service Act 1999.	Mandatory
17AG(4)(c)(i)	Workplace relations	Information on the number of SES and non-SES employees covered by agreements etc identified in paragraph 17AG(4)(c).	Mandatory
17AG(4)(c)(ii)	Workplace relations	The salary ranges available for APS employees by classification level.	Mandatory
17AG(4)(c)(iii)	Workplace relations	A description of non-salary benefits provided to employees.	Mandatory
17AG(4)(d)(i)	N/A	Information on the number of employees at each classification level who received performance pay.	If applicable, Mandatory
17AG(4)(d)(ii)	N/A	Information on aggregate amounts of performance pay at each classification level.	If applicable, Mandatory
17AG(4)(d)(iii)	N/A	Information on the average amount of performance payment, and range of such payments, at each classification level.	If applicable, Mandatory
17AG(4)(d)(iv)	N/A	Information on aggregate amount of performance payments.	If applicable, Mandatory
Assets Management			
17AG(5)	Asset management	An assessment of effectiveness of assets management where asset management is a significant part of the entity's activities	If applicable, mandatory
Purchasing			
17AG(6)	Purchasing	An assessment of entity performance against the	Mandatory

		Commonwealth Procurement Rules.	
	Reportable consultancy contracts		
17AG(7)(a)	Purchasing	A summary statement detailing the number of new reportable consultancy contracts entered into during the period; the total actual expenditure on all such contracts (inclusive of GST); the number of ongoing reportable consultancy contracts that were entered into during a previous reporting period; and the total actual expenditure in the reporting period on those ongoing contracts (inclusive of GST).	Mandatory
17AG(7)(b)	Purchasing	A statement that “During [reporting period], [specified number] new reportable consultancy contracts were entered into involving total actual expenditure of \$[specified million]. In addition, [specified number] ongoing reportable consultancy contracts were active during the period, involving total actual expenditure of \$[specified million]”.	Mandatory
17AG(7)(c)	Purchasing	A summary of the policies and procedures for selecting and engaging consultants and the main categories of purposes for which consultants were selected and engaged.	Mandatory
17AG(7)(d)	Purchasing	A statement that “Annual reports contain information about actual expenditure on reportable consultancy contracts. Information on the value of reportable consultancy contracts is available on the AusTender website.”	Mandatory
	Reportable non-consultancy contracts		
17AG(7A)(a)	Purchasing	A summary statement detailing the number of new reportable non-consultancy contracts entered into during the period; the total actual expenditure on such contracts (inclusive of GST); the number of ongoing reportable non-consultancy contracts that were entered into during a previous reporting period; and the total actual expenditure in the reporting period on those ongoing contracts (inclusive of GST).	Mandatory
17AG(7A)(b)	Purchasing	A statement that “Annual reports contain information about actual expenditure on reportable non-consultancy contracts. Information on the value of reportable non-consultancy contracts is available on the AusTender website.”	Mandatory
17AD(daa)	Additional information about organisations receiving amounts under reportable consultancy contracts or reportable non-consultancy contracts		
17AGA	Purchasing	Additional information, in accordance with section 17AGA, about organisations receiving amounts under reportable consultancy contracts or reportable non-consultancy contracts.	Mandatory
	Australian National Audit Office Access Clauses		
17AG(8)	N/A	If an entity entered into a contract with a value of more than \$100 000 (inclusive of GST) and the contract did not provide the Auditor-General with access to the contractor's premises, the report must include the name of the contractor, purpose and value of the contract, and the reason why a clause allowing access was not included in the contract.	If applicable, Mandatory
	Exempt contracts		
17AG(9)	Purchasing	If an entity entered into a contract or there is a standing offer with a value greater than \$10 000 (inclusive of GST) which has been exempted from being published in AusTender because it would disclose exempt matters under the FOI Act, the annual report must include a statement that the contract or standing	If applicable, Mandatory

		offer has been exempted, and the value of the contract or standing offer, to the extent that doing so does not disclose the exempt matters.	
	Small business		
17AG(10)(a)	Purchasing	A statement that “[Name of entity] supports small business participation in the Commonwealth Government procurement market. Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) and Small Enterprise participation statistics are available on the Department of Finance’s website.”	Mandatory
17AG(10)(b)	Purchasing	An outline of the ways in which the procurement practices of the entity support small and medium enterprises.	Mandatory
17AG(10)(c)	Purchasing	If the entity is considered by the Department administered by the Finance Minister as material in nature—a statement that “[Name of entity] recognises the importance of ensuring that small businesses are paid on time. The results of the Survey of Australian Government Payments to Small Business are available on the Treasury’s website.”	If applicable, Mandatory
	Financial Statements		
17AD(e)	Independent Auditor's Report	Inclusion of the annual financial statements in accordance with subsection 43(4) of the Act.	Mandatory
	Executive Remuneration		
17AD(da)	Workplace relations	Information about executive remuneration in accordance with Subdivision C of Division 3A of Part 2-3 of the Rule.	Mandatory
17AD(f)	Other Mandatory Information		
17AH(1)(a)(i)	Advertising and market research	If the entity conducted advertising campaigns, a statement that “During [reporting period], the [name of entity] conducted the following advertising campaigns: [name of advertising campaigns undertaken]. Further information on those advertising campaigns is available at [address of entity’s website] and in the reports on Australian Government advertising prepared by the Department of Finance. Those reports are available on the Department of Finance’s website.”	If applicable, Mandatory
17AH(1)(a)(ii)	N/A	If the entity did not conduct advertising campaigns, a statement to that effect.	If applicable, Mandatory
17AH(1)(b)	N/A	A statement that “Information on grants awarded by [name of entity] during [reporting period] is available at [address of entity’s website].”	If applicable, Mandatory
17AH(1)(c)	Workplace diversity and inclusion	Outline of mechanisms of disability reporting, including reference to website for further information.	Mandatory
17AH(1)(d)	Information Publication Scheme	Website reference to where the entity’s Information Publication Scheme statement pursuant to Part II of FOI Act can be found.	Mandatory
17AH(1)(e)	Appendix C: Errors and omissions	Correction of material errors in previous annual report	If applicable, mandatory
17AH(2)	Appendix B: Environmental sustainability	Information required by other legislation	Mandatory